SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AS THE BASIS FOR RHETORICAL THEORY

by

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A quick glance through the "Acknowledgements" pages of numerous theses and dissertations revealed to me the humility and/or indebtedness of their writers. Few claim credit for having worked their fingers to the bone. I have always wondered why more didn't claim "I worked like the devil on this and I deserve the credit." Now I know.

So, with deep indebtedness I wish to express sincere appreciation to those who were instrumental in the development of this study. To my committee, a hearty thanks: to Dr. William Conboy and Dr. Calvin Downs for serving well as reading members of the committee; to Dr. Thomas Beisecker for his unique computer analysis of A Grammar of Motives and his continually helpful comments; to Dr. Wil Linkugel, an "eight" first baseman if there ever was one (move over, Mr. Bottomley), for his wise counsel, and to Dr. Donn Parson, M. O. C., for his consistently incisive comments, his willingness to help when the crises developed, and his kind friendship at all times. Thanks, too, to many of my fellow graduate students whose comments often helped to check and redirect my thinking--especially to Don Linholm, who served as a sounding board and a critic for many of the ideas in this study.

Finally, my most sincere thanks to three people very close to me: to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Harrell, who have provided constant encouragement to me for many years; and to my wife, Lynda, who has weathered well more closed doors and pages of proof reading than I would care to count.

And, to the writers of "Jesus Christ, Superstar" for the words that seem so appropriate now that it is all over:

I only want to say
If there is a way
Take this cup away from me for I don't want
  to taste its poison
Feel it burn me, I have changed I'm not as sure
As when we started
Then I was inspired
Now I'm sad and tired
Listen surely I've exceeded expectations
Tried for three years seems like thirty
Could you ask as much from any other man?
But if I die
See the saga through and do the things you ask of me
Let them hate me hit me hurt me nail me to their tree
. . .
Why I should die
Would I be more noticed than I was ever before?
Would the things I've said and done matter any more?
. . .
Can you show me now that I would not be killed in vain?
Show me just a little of your omnipresent brain
Show me there's a reason for your wanting me to die
You're far too keen on where and how and not so hot on why
. . .
Then I was inspired
Now I'm sad and tired
After all I've tried for three years seems like ninety
Why then am I scared to finish what I started
What you started--I didn't start it
God thy will is hard
But you hold every card
I will drink your cup of poison, nail me to the cross
  and break me
Bleed me beat me kill me take me now--
  before I change my mind

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Chapter 1

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

James Murphy, in a recent review of books exploring "the new rhetoric," closed his remarks with an apt "bemoanment": "Like the man drinking the tidal wave through a straw, we have to make up our minds shortly or we will drown in a sea of data. Whether we build a boat to solve the problem, or grow wings, or make a bigger straw . . . the present situation cannot long continue."[1] We have seen or heard of rhetorics based in such a variety of fields that one is hard-pressed to imagine comprehending all of them, much less sorting through them to attempt a synthesis of various of these "new rhetorics" into a unified approach. Yet, in the face of this multi-grounded renewal of theorizing about rhetoric we come across the paradoxical complaint of Richard Ohmann: " . . . rhetoricians have lately taken to using the phrase 'new rhetoric' as if it had a reference like that of the word 'horse,' rather than that of the word 'hippogriff.'"[2]

Perhaps, though, these two statements are not as paradoxical as they seem at first glance. The past few years have witnessed an explosion of theorizing about the nature of rhetoric. The Aristotelian system has been challenged, reaffirmed, and challenged anew. Many writers pursue

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[1]James J. Murphy, "Today's Rhetoric--The Searches for Analogy," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LIV (1968), p. 170.

[2]Richard Ohmann, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 64.

their own paths with little regard for an attempt at integrating their views with those of other writers. Further, very few writers take the time or the effort to present a fully developed explanation of the theoretical ground from which they work. If such incomplete scholarship abounds, we probably do have on our hands an (undefined) hippogriff rather than a (clearly defined) horse.

We need now to draw back from the battle and see what we have done so that future growth in the field may proceed on a stronger understanding of the groundwork of rhetoric. As Otis M. Walter has suggested, "We must uncover the starting points, the assumptions, the presuppositions of ancient and modern rhetorics if we are to understand the nature of our predecessors and to glimpse the revolutionary quality of rhetoric and if, indeed, we are even to see rhetoric clearly."[3] Such starting points are "sometimes logically necessary prerequisites, assumptions, or presuppositions on which the rhetorical system itself rests."[4]

THE PROBLEM FOR STUDY

This study cannot alone hope to arrest the tidal wave of which Murphy spoke, but it can begin to construct the dike which could deaden the force of the water. The study seeks to investigate one of the "new rhetorics," that stemming from the "symbolic interactionists'" position in social psychology and sociology. This perspective seems to be broad enough in scope to adequately explain most human rhetorical behavior.

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[3]Otis M. Walter, "On Views of Rhetoric, Whether Conservative or Progressive," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 30.

[4]Ibid., p. 27.

Three basic goals are implicit in the investigation of this "new rhetoric": First, the literature of the symbolic interactionists will be studied in an attempt to condense their ideas which can lay the groundwork for rhetorical theory; second, an attempt will be made to draw from symbolic interaction theory implications for rhetorical theory. Specifically, I shall be concerned with finding those elements of human social behavior which are peculiarly rhetorical. Third, I will examine this theory of rhetoric in terms of its application as a social force in human interaction. In short, this study could be classified as an exercise in explanatory or integrative theory building, in that it aims to draw from the ideas developed for one field in order to re-direct and clarify the ideas in another.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

For any theory of rhetoric to be complete and fully useful it must be based upon sound philosophical groundwork. Further, for the students of rhetoric to fully understand their subject, they must first understand its philosophical bases. Therefore, one of the primary charges of this study is to explicate the philosophical position of the symbolic interactionists. Richard L. Johannesen has suggested the questions which such a philosophical inquiry should attempt to answer:

> With respect to any specific theory of rhetoric, a philosophy of that theory would explore at least the following questions: (1) What is the nature of reality and knowledge embodied in the theory? (2) What is the nature of meaning and language? (3) What is the nature of man and what are his uniquely human characteristics? Is man the rhetorical animal by virtue of his unique symbol-manipulation capacity? (4) What is the personal, cultural, and societal role of rhetoric? (5) What ethical system explicitly or implicitly relates to the

> theory? (6) What definition of rhetoric does the theory present? What is the essential nature of rhetoric?[5]

This work is designed to answer most of these questions directly (quite probably, question five will be answered only by implication)--to uncover the philosophical underpinnings of what we may for the moment "ambiguously" call a "symbolic interactionist's rhetoric."

Introduction to the Symbolic Interactionists' Perspective

The perspective from which this study will view rhetoric is termed "symbolic interaction." It is a perspective which has quietly worked its way into rhetorical theory through the writings of Kenneth Burke. But Burke has not proclaimed himself a symbolic interactionist, nor has he ever explicitly spelled out the principles of symbolic interaction. And, he is not alone. The literature of the speech field is astoundingly barren of any direct description of symbolic interaction theory. In the next few chapters such a direct explication of the ideas of the symbolic interactionists will be developed. The purpose of these chapters is twofold: to acquaint the reader with a theory of social action which has numerous implications for rhetoric and to provide the answers to several of Johannesen's questions. In preparation for those chapters, an orientation to this perspective seems in order.

"The term 'symbolic interaction' refers, of course, to the . . . character of interaction as it takes place between human beings."[6]

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[5]Richard L. Johannesen, "Editor's Introduction," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 2-3.

[6]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 139.

In this way Herbert Blumer beings an explanation of the perspective of the symbolic interactionist. Though the theory of symbolic interaction has its roots deeply imbedded in the work of George Herbert Mead, Robert E. Park, and John Dewey, it was Blumer who first coined the term "symbolic interaction."[7] In his 1969 book he reveals some dissatisfaction with the term itself, maintaining that it is a "somewhat barbaric neologism that I coined in an offhand way . . . The term somehow caught on and is now in general use."[8]

But despite his regret over the term he chose, he and many other social theorists maintain that the symbolic interactionists' perspective is a viable one which can more adequately explain human conduct than can other theoretical thrusts. Part One of the present study is designed to present a systematic explanation of the basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism. It is well, then, that we should now pave the way for these chapters with a brief statement of the elements included in this perspective.

At base, the distinguishing feature of the symbolic interactionists' position regarding human conduct

> consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, or interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.[9]

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[7]see Herbert Blumer, "Social Psychology," Man and Society, ed. Emerson P. Schmidt (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1938).

[8]Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 1.

[9]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 139.

Examination of a series of statements made by three of the current proponents of symbolic interactionism will explain more fully the several implications of this basic definition.

Blumer claims that symbolic interactionism can be reduced, in essence, to three simple premises:

> The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. Such things include everything that the human being may note in his world . . . The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.[10]

More specifically, we first encounter the importance of a system of symbols, or a language, in the symbolic interactionists' approach to human conduct. Garretson writes:

> The general theory of symbolic interaction, specifically self theory, is focused upon the importance of language as an instrument of definition and communication. People are seen as responding not directly to a resistant outer reality but to meanings of objects which are defined within a cultural system and social organization.[11]

The centrality of language as an instrument of definition and mediation was first realized by Mead. As Blumer notes, Mead distinguished symbolic from non-symbolic interaction.

> In non-symbolic interaction human beings respond directly to one another's gestures or actions; in symbolic interaction they interpret each other's

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[10]Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, p. 2.

[11]Wynona Smutz Garretson, "The Consensual Definition of Social Objects," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 337.

> gestures and act on the basis of the meaning yielded by the interpretation. An unwitting response to the tone of another's voice illustrates non-symbolic interaction. Interpretating the shaking of a fist as signifying that a person is preparing to attack illustrates symbolic interaction.[12]

Mead's emphasis of the importance of language as a mediating factor in human conduct implies yet another important element of symbolic interaction theory. As explained by Blumer, man does interpret reality through internal processes before reacting to it:

> . . . individual action is a construction and not a release, being built up by the individual through noting and interpreting features of the situations in which he acts; . . . group or collective actions, brought about by the individuals' interpreting or taking into account each other's actions.[13]

The continuous interpretation which an individual places on his social situations implies, further, that human interaction is a developmental process, not a series of relatively isolated events. Human group life has the "character of an ongoing process--a continuing matter of fitting developing lines of conduct to one another." As this process of definition and interpretation operates, it both "sustain/s/ established patterns of joint conduct and . . . open/s/ them to transformation."[14]

Process, in turn, brings to light the importance of time dimensions. As an individual interprets his current situation and attempts to project an effective response to it he naturally calls up memories of past

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[12]Herbert Blumer, "The Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," American Journal of Sociology, 71 (1966), p. 537.

[13]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 142.

[14]Blumer, "Sociological Implications," p. 538.

experience. Thus, both past and future are considered critical to the conduct of present actions by symbolic interactionists. And, as Rose argues, "the relation of experience and behavior is seen as highly complex." Further, in his past experiences man has developed a concept of himself, a concept which influences all his present actions:

> . . . because a person can never "unlearn" something--although he can drastically modify the learning ("relearn it")--and because the conception of self is the most important meaning for man's behavior, a concept of self once learned affects an individual's behavior throughout his life.[15]

Finally, for present purposes, for the symbolic interactionists man is the determiner of his own actions. Outside forces may help to shape his actions, but he makes the final determination of which courses to follow. At base, this begins the theory of human action for these social analysts. They draw a clear distinction between motion and action, claiming that man is an actor. He does not "move" in automatic response to stimuli; rather, he acts after mediating the stimuli and critically choosing from among a number of possible responses. Blumer couches this idea in terms of the importance of the individual and society (a stimulus field) in determining particular actions:

> First, from the standpoint of symbolic interaction the organization of a human society is the framework inside of which social action takes place and is not the determinant of that action. Second, such organization and changes in it are the product of the activity of acting units and not of "forces" which leave such acting units out of account.[16]

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[15]Arnold Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in his Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), pp. 17-18.

[16]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 146.

This listing of the elements included in symbolic interaction theory is not intended to be exhaustive. Other features could surely be included in a more comprehensive analysis.[17] All that is intended here is to provide an introduction to some of the more basic elements of the theory so that the reader may begin to get a flavor of the direction symbolic interactionists take in their analysis of human conduct. It is a theory which purports to be capable of critically examining most any form of human symbolic endeavor, embracing equally well--as Blumer maintains--"such relationships as cooperation, conflict, domination, exploitation, consensus, disagreement, closely knit identification, and indifferent concern for another."[18] If the theory can, indeed, cover the full range of human association then it must surely contain the groundwork for a theory of rhetoric.

Source Materials

The wide range of sources available to the student of rhetoric interested in studying symbolic interaction theory must surely approach infinity--or so it seems to this student. Not only does the student have available to him the rich resources of the psychologists and sociologists who have developed the symbolic interaction perspective and the several books and articles now being written about the "new rhetoric," but there are numerous secondary sources providing excellent commentaries and critiques of the primary sources.

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[17]For a more complete listing of the elements involved in this theory see Rose, "Systematic Summary."

[18]Blumer, "Sociological Implications," p. 538.

Most basic to this study are the writings of Kenneth Burke, for they touch on both symbolic interactionism and rhetoric. In a way, they make up the heart of this study because they, at least indirectly, bridge the gap between the two fields. Burke has written more words than most of us would care to count. Eight of his books have at least an indirect bearing upon either symbolic interaction or rhetoric. Of those, five books are of great value to this study: Counter-Statement,[19] A Grammar of Motives,[20] Language as Symbolic Action,[21] Permanence and Change,[22] and A Rhetoric of Motives.[23] In addition, Stanley Edgar Hyman has edited two books containing some relevant Burke writings: Perspectives by Incongruity,[24] and Terms for Order.[25]

Burke's writings, however, are far from clear. His mind is active and complex, but it is not especially systematic. William Rueckert has made what might be termed the understatement of the decade regarding Burke's works: "Nothing is ever merely simple in Burke."[26] Therefore,

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[19]Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

[20]Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

[21]Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

[22]Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965).

[23]Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

[24]Stanley Edgar Hyman, ed., Perspectives by Incongruity (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).

[25]Stanley Edgar Hyman, ed., Terms for Order (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).

[26]William Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 137.

the help of several writers who "translate" Burke's ideas has been gratefully received. Among them is William Rueckert who has written one brilliant book and edited another: Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations[27] and Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1924-1966.[28] While Rueckert approaches Burke from the standpoint of literary criticism, Hugh Dalziel Duncan views Burke's works from the standpoint of sociology. Most directly influenced by Burke is Duncan's Communication and Social Order.[29] Equally helpful in studying Burke, but not so directly influenced by him, is Duncan's Symbols in Society.[30] It should be noted that Duncan is more than an interpreter of Burke--he is a sound social theorist in his own right, and his books and articles are firmly grounded in the perspective of symbolic interaction.

A few basic sources containing an amazing quantity of information can serve to acquaint the student with symbolic interaction. Specifically, there are three books of collected readings which are of particular value: Human Behavior and Social Processes, edited by Arnold Rose;[31] Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, edited by Jerome G.

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[27]Ibid. See entire book.

[28]William Rueckert, ed., Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1924-1966 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969).

[29]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[30]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[31]Arnold Rose, ed., Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962).

Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer;[32] and Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, edited by Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman.[33] In addition, Herbert Blumer's recent Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method[34] provides a good basic explanation of the field from the point of view of its foremost current proponent. Finally, two comprehensive articles contained in the collected readings texts give excellent, concise statements regarding the basic positions and goals of the symbolic interactionist: Herbert Blumer's "Society as Symbolic Interaction,"[35] and Arnold Rose's "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory."[36]

For the student interested in a full understanding of symbolic interactionism several of George Herbert Mead's works are of some importance, since Mead is generally recognized as the first to systematically develop many of the ideas that these theorists now hold. Three Mead books are of particular relevance: Mind, Self, and Society,[37] The Philosophy of the Present;[38] and The Philosophy of the Act.[39] Beyond these works,

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[32]Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer, eds., Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

[33]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, eds., Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970).

[34]Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism.

[35]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction."

[36]Rose, "Systematic Summary."

[37]George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[38]George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Present (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932).

[39]George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Act (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938).

two books of selected Mead readings contain additional writings, plus condensed and edited versions of some of the more critical sections of the former three books: Selected Writings: George Herbert Mead[40] and George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology.[41] Additional help is available to the student in interpreting and evaluating Mead's work in the form of books and articles about Mead's ideas. Paul Pfuetze's Self, Society, and Existence[42] is a particularly incisive treatment of Mead. Maurice Natanson's The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead[43] does a good job of explaining Mead's views of society. Further, two articles provide a clear capsulization of Mead's basic views of social intercourse: Herbert Blumer's "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead,"[44] and Bernard N. Meltzer's article, "Mead's Social Psychology."[45]

The literature currently available in regard to the "new rhetoric" is also quite extensive, though not all of it is directly concerned with the symbolic interactionists' views. Daniel Fogarty's Roots for a New

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[40]Andrew Reck, ed., Selected Writings: George Herbert Mead (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964).

[41]Anselm Strauss, ed., George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[42]Paul E. Pfuetze, Self, Society, and Existence (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

[43]Maurice Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1956).

[44]Blumer, "Sociological Implications."

[45]Bernard N. Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

Rhetoric[46] and W. Ross Winterowd's Rhetoric: A Synthesis[47] both include a cogent synthesis of the rhetorical system of Kenneth Burke. A number of fine articles that either directly or indirectly address themselves to a symbolic interaction based rhetoric can be found in Richard L. Johannesen's Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings[48] and in Douglas Ehninger's Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader's Coursebook.[49] One other recent book, more concerned with rhetorical criticism than with rhetorical theory per se, has a good statement of the basic nature of symbolic interaction rhetoric: Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric.[50] She is one of the few authors who has clearly attempted to begin the development of the type of rhetorical theory with which this study is directly concerned. In addition to the opening chapter of the Campbell book, her "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory"[51] is also of significant value. Other articles have been published which directly or indirectly promote or add to Burkeian rhetoric--most of them appearing in one of the two selected readings texts just noted. The

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[46]Daniel Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Russell & Russell, 1959).

[47]W. Ross Winterowd, Rhetoric: A Synthesis (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968).

[48]Richard L. Johannesen, ed., Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

[49]Douglas Ehninger, ed., Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader's Coursebook (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972).

[50]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

[51]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), pp. 97-108.

Journal of Philosophy and Rhetoric has been especially active in publishing materials relevant to this new thrust in rhetorical theory.

One final matter needs to be explained in regard to source materials. It is sometimes unclear as to whether an individual writer has accepted symbolic interactionism as his perspective. Thus, an explanation of how I have chosen my sources seems in order. Generally, I have chosen to include the ideas of a writer when any of three conditions are met by his work: (1) If he has declared himself, in one way or another, to be working from the symbolic interactionists' perspective; (2) if the writer is generally termed a symbolic interactionist by his colleagues--as with many of those whose articles have been included in one of the books of selected readings; or, (3) if the writer probably does not totally accept the symbolic interactionist perspective, but does hold to a part of their theories on some particular issue or issues. I have used this procedure both for choosing those writers concerned with symbolic interaction theory per se, and for choosing those concerned with the rhetoric which can grow from this basic theory. As an example of the third type of writer, where the greatest possibility for misinterpretation exists, I have chosen to refer to the writings of Richard M. Weaver from time to time. It is clear to me that Weaver is not a symbolic interactionist, but many of his views on the persuasive nature of language parallel the views of symbolic interactionists. Thus, I feel it fair and beneficial to draw from his work in this limited way. In such cases I have attempted to avoid implications that someone fully expounds the symbolic interaction position when, in reality, he does not.

CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTERS

This study will be divided into two parts. Part One will be concerned specifically with the ideas of the symbolic interactionists as they have developed largely without direct reference to rhetoric. In Part Two, I will draw direct implications from symbolic interaction theory in an attempt to describe the form that a rhetoric based in symbolic interaction might take.

Part One

The four chapters contained in Part One are designed to systematically answer Johannesen's questions about the nature of reality and knowledge, meaning and language, man, and an implied ethical system. It is important that the reader understand, in preparation for these chapters, that symbolic interactionism grew out of the American pragmatic philosophy movement. Thus, at base, the symbolic interactionist is concerned with language, reality, meaning, and the like insofar as they serve man interacting in society. Their concern is not with some type of "Platonic ideal," but rather it is with the concrete business of everyday human interaction.

The chapters in Part One are titled in terms of Kenneth Burke's pentad--the elements of which make up the constituent parts of the drama of human interaction. This format was chosen because of the completeness which the Burkeian system exhibits in terms of man interacting in society. In the terms act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose can be found implications about all the elements which make up human social behavior. But, at the same time, these terms allow me to keep the elements of human behavior separated enough that a systematic explanation of them is possible.

Before beginning the precis of the chapters contained in Part One, it is necessary to make a brief statement regarding the ethical system which is implicit in the symbolic interaction view of human action. The nature of man's ethical system implied by the writings of the symbolic interactionists is not directly addressed in any specific chapter, but it lurks in the background throughout most of Part One. Basically, they say, because man makes judgements of better and worse and makes choices regarding his actions based upon those judgments, there is an ethical element in any action he undertakes. These theorists seldom address the topic of ethics as it is generally thought of in more formal philosophies. If pressed, they would presumably regard identification between men (a socially cohesive motive) as the ethical principle against which human actions are to be judged. In this respect, a statement of ethics growing out of symbolic interaction theory would be situationally grounded. Particularly instructive vis-a-vis ethics is the section in Chapter Two regarding the hortatory negative and Chapter Five's discussion of human motives.

Chapter Two is addressed to the question: "What is the nature of man?" Basically, man is viewed by the symbolic interactionists as a symbol-using animal. All of his other qualities grow from and are grounded in this essential quality. At base, this implies that man's social interactions can all be reduced to a symbolic core--all that he does (in terms of social actions) is somehow influenced by the language that he uses.

This chapter relies heavily upon the writings of Kenneth Burke, mainly because he is the only symbolic interactionist who has either felt the need or taken the time to fully spell out his assumptions

about man. I do not view it as a weakness that such a heavy reliance is being placed here on Burke, however. His description of man is a cogent one, and one which meshes well with the assumptions that other writers seem to be making.

Chapter Three concerns agency and scene. It is designed to explore the nature of language, meaning, reality, and man's knowledge of reality. The symbolic interactionists view language as the primary agency for man's interaction with man. Three aspects of the impact of language on man stand out as most important. First, language plays a significant "naming" function in that we learn to react to a thing in terms of the way we have named it. In this way, language constructs "terministic screens" which prevent us from seeing all that there is to be seen in "reality." For example, if we have "named" bearded men as radical we may automatically react to individual bearded men as though they were radical without making any attempt to see if anything else confirms this notion. Second, language is necessarily ambiguous. The ambiguity of language actually facilitates communication, since it allows the types of generalization that are necessary if we are to be able to interact and still use a vocabulary containing a manageable number of words. Third, language is inherently persuasive, in that words always stir up meanings in the persons who hear them. Language is full of implicit exhortations. And because we attach emotion-laden meanings to the words we utter and hear, those words contain within them an implicit program of action toward their meanings.

The symbolic interactionists view meanings as being developed by individuals based upon a combination of their perceptions and the prevailing meanings which society holds. Meaning is the key to human

action, as man reacts to ideas and actions in terms of the meaning that those ideas and actions stir up in him. Man determines meaning--it is not an integral element of any object which is automatically understood upon the appearance of the object.

Finally, reality is considered in terms of its social impact. These theorists do not deny that real, concrete objects do exist "out there." Rather, they say that the real world is meaningful to social interaction only as various individuals perceive it. And, the interpretations we place on reality are mediated througn language. Our knowledge (interpretation) of reality is limited to that part of the environment which we can perceive--and our terministic screens limit our ability to see all that there is in the social environment. Because of the language system each of us has learned, we tend to see some aspects of any situation or object and ignore other aspects.

Chapter Four is concerned with the nature of the act. It does not directly answer any of Johannesen's questions, but it does contribute to an understanding of several of them. First, man is viewed as a controller of his own actions. The symbolic interactionists posit the idea that although man may not always keep total control over the things that he does, he still has the capacity to do so. Second, because of tne control that man can have over his actions he is seen as a goal-seeking animal. The symbolic interactionists have broken action down into four basic stages: impulse, perception, manipulation, and consummation. In the process of acting, man searches out perceptual objects in his environment, perceives them by defining them in terms of his language, internally plots out a course of action with regard to the thing he is perceiving, and finally overtly reacts to it. Two basic types of act are distinguished

by the symbolic interactionist. The first is the individual act, which is one that a single person undertakes in order to fulfill a personal goal. The other is a "social act," or a joint action, which two or more persons undertake jointly to fulfill a shared goal. I will also suggest a third type of action, the "thought act," which is an act that reaches consummation entirely in the mind of an individual; it never is consciously projected into the objective reality of another person. Thus, because of the central importance of the act to the social exchanges of man an understanding of the nature of action contributes to the understanding of both man and the ways in which language helps man derive meaning from reality.

Chapter Five discusses purpose, and is designed to explore the ways in which man's motives operate to shape his social actions. Again, it does not directly discuss any of Johannesen's questions, but it does contribute to the understanding of ethics and human action. It is relevant to ethics because we judge a man's actions in various situations as much by the motives we ascribe to his acts as by the actual effects of those actions. And it is relevant to an understanding of human action because the study of motives is a study of those forces which internally "goad" man to action. At base, motives are considered the "why" of human action. Physiological factors and psychological leanings are seen as contributing to motives. However, social conditions in the environment are equally important. In fact, the symbolic interactionists go so far as to claim that motives are merely shorthand terms for situations (situations being defined in terms of individual perceptions of environmental conditions).

The unique contribution which the symbolic interactionists make to

motive theory is the concept of "symbol as motive." Not only can the physical realities of the environment serve as motives to action, but so can words. In fact, because man interprets reality through symbols, all motivation is in some way affected by the symbols we use.

This chapter also contains a discussion of another extremely important part of symbolic interaction theory: role-taking. Basically, role-taking consists of internalizing the motives and feelings of others. Once this "internalization of the other" takes place, we are in a position to "act like" the other person would act in given situations. Thus, we can test our ideas and actions against the internalized picture of the other person before we act overtly. By gauging the probably impact of various possible actions, we are able to "test" in advance the reaction which the actions we are motivated to undertake will have upon those we view as our "audience."

Part Two

The four chapters which make up Part Two of this study are designed to answer Johannesen's questions regarding the nature of rhetoric and the personal, cultural, and societal role of rhetoric. To this end, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven investigate the nature of a rhetoric based in the theory of symbolic interaction; Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine investigate the personal, cultural, and social role of rhetoric.

Chapter Six looks at the implications for rhetoric of the ideas of the symbolic interactionists. First, an attempt is made to differentiate symbolic interactionist rhetoric from the traditional approach patterned after Aristotle. Basically, the new rhetoric is a much broader conceptualization. Where "persuasion" was the key term of the old rhetoric,

"identification" is the key term of the new. And, as persuasion implies the achievement of personal goals through gaining acquiescence from an audience (this is somewhat analagous to the individual act), identification implies the achievement of joint goals through common action (somewhat analagous to joint action or the social act).

In this chapter, rhetoric is termed "a rationale for pragmatically oriented symbolic behavior," meaning that any time man uses symbols for the achievement of socially desired ends he is acting rhetorically. Rhetoric is further viewed as the language of "address," in that we tailor our messages to appeal to specific others. The rhetorical situation is seen as a circumstance filled with problems which need to be resolved. Thus, rhetoric is a problem-solving activity. And, because we tend to take the role of those we address in order to test our ideas against their probable reactions, rhetoric is a strategic activity.

Chapter Seven considers the nature of the rhetorical act. Taking "the use of pragmatically oriented discourse" as the basic nature of rhetoric, the breadth of this approach is considered. Viewed this way, rhetorical behavior includes not only speaker-audience interaction, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal symbolic acts. Further, the view is taken that even sub-consciously directed actions may be considered as rhetorical. Additional attention is also given to the concept of audience, noting the extreme importance of "audience analysis" in a symbolic interaction based rhetoric. Out of the interactionists' approach to the act comes the notion that we must seek to identify as many of the "receiver's" motives as possible. We must seek to "become one" with him so that we may internally test our ideas before we actually submit them to the test of overt action.

Chapter Eight addresses the social and cultural role of rhetoric through an examination of identification (the primary rhetorical motive) and the social order. The basic concern of the chapter is with the ways in which rhetoric operates to establish and change the social order. The interplay of identification and its counterpart, division, is examined in terms of the ways in which social order is established in a culture and the ways in which it begins to break down. Man is viewed as making covenants with certain values through his hierarchic choices. But because man is incapable of perfectly fulfilling his covenants, he inevitably fails to achieve his goals and becomes guilt-ridden. Through the twin processes of mortification and victimage he manages to feel that he has been redeemed and renews his pledge to another social hierarchy, slightly different from the last. Finally, the concept of social order and disorder is examined on the level of an entire society to determine the ways in which society can maintain order marked by progress. The writings of Hugh Dalziel Duncan are used extensively in this chapter, primarily because he is the writer who has been most concerned with the way in which symbolic action functions to achieve and maintain social order.

Chapter Nine examines rhetoric as a social force from a slightly different angle. In this chapter, balance theory--which suggests that individuals attempt to perceive the world in a way that will seem internally consistent to them--is explored as a basis for a theory of persuasion. Primary reliance is placed upon the version of balance theory advocated by Theodore Newcomb. A number of studies conducted by Newcomb, Rodrigues, and others are investigated and conclusions are drawn from their data regarding the conditions under which persuasion is most likely to be possible and the types of appeals which can most

likely succeed in a given circumstance. Finally, many of the findings of these studies are seen to give support to the Burkeian notion that identification is the primary rhetorical motive of man. Balance theory is seen to be a rich source for the student of persuasion--and one which has largely been ignored to date.

CONCLUSION

This is an exciting point in time for the student of rhetoric. Our field is engaged in changing the "order" under which it has worked for most of this century. The Aristotelian system of rhetoric is under severe challenge from many quarters. One point of challenge comes from the symbolic interactionists' theory of social action. This challenge does not reject Aristotelian theory. Rather, it says that the social system has changed to an extent and that the Aristotelian system is not broad enough to account for all that should rightly be termed rhetorical action. This study is an attempt to add to an understanding of the challenge to rhetoric's "social order" being placed by those who subscribe to the perspective of symbolic interaction. It is hoped that the following chapters will reflect the excitement which now permeates the field of rhetoric.

Chapter 2

AGENT: MAN IN AND THROUGH SYMBOLS

Basic to any theory of rhetoric is an understanding of the nature of man. It is generally argued that the classical view of rhetoric grows out of a rationalistic view of man. Thus, rhetoric has come to emphasize the rational use of language for purposes of influence. Other theories of man's nature posit other views and would, thus, place a different emphasis upon the basic nature of rhetoric. One such theory is that of the symbolic interactionists who say that man is first, last, and always a symbol-using animal; he is so deeply grounded in symbols that all his social actions are in some way influenced by the language system he has learned. In this chapter I will chart the major implications of viewing man as a symbol-user. The writings of Kenneth Burke will predominate, primarily because it is Burke that has directly addressed himself to discussions of the nature of man. Most of the other symbolic interactionists simply assume a view of man, but do not explicitly spell it out.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has recently attempted to explain three predominant approaches to rhetoric in terms of their "ontological foundations." Though some of her arguments concerning the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches may be overdrawn, her capsulization of the ontological base for these systems is instructive:

> Three interpretations of this common ontological presumption /man is, by nature, subject to and

> capable of persuasion/ have become dominant. Traditional theory explains that man is rhetorical because he is rational; behavioristic theory explains that he is rhetorical because he has certain basic, unlearned drives; theories of symbolic behavior explain that he is rhetorical because he is the symbol-using or signifying animal.[1]

A second recent approach--in social psychology rather than in rhetoric--has suggested two, rather than three, predominant views of man.

> Two fundamentally disparate images persist. First, man is conceived as a passive neutral agent buffeted about by stimuli that impinge upon his nerve endings. These stimuli may be external--reifications of society, instincts, needs, or drives--or they may be some combination of external and internal forces. Second, and in direct contrast, man is viewed as an active agent, selecting out those stimuli or objects to which he shall respond, accomplishing his selections in the matrix of communication, and transforming his society or his social world in the process.[2]

We begin, then, an inquiry into the philosophical bases of a symbolic interactionist's approach to rhetoric by asking, "What is Man?" In consulting two writers we have already uncovered two ways of approaching the question, and we have before us three "definitions." A third writer, however, adds many more "ways of viewing" man. Kenneth Burke, who has a way of saying more about something than most anyone else, capsulized additional views of man which history and scholarly leanings have bequeathed:

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[1]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 97. Campbell is being grouped with the symbolic interactionists because her writings regarding rhetorical theory and criticism are based upon certain fundamental assumptions which mesh with many of the central tenets of symbolic interactionism.

[2]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Introduction," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 2.

> Given the range of meanings in the ancient Greek's concept of "politics," the anthropologists' definition of man as the "culture-bearing animal" is not far from Aristotle's view of man as the "political animal." . . . Just as Aristotle's definition serves most directly for his book on politics, so the anthropologists' definition serves most directly for their studies of tribal cultures. "Social animal" might most directly suit sociologists. . . . For the psychologist, man is a "psychological" animal; for the psychoanalyst a mentally sick animal (a psychopathology being a natural part of even the average or "normal" Everyman's everyday life); for the chemist man should be a congeries of chemicals; and so on.[3]

Perhaps, for purposes of the present study, matters could be simplified by calling man a "rhetorical animal" and smugly offering a system of rhetoric to go with the animal. We could then define man in terms of the rhetorical system and be done with it. But this approach, as with other field-oriented views of man, would serve only the narrowest of purposes. Such definitions of man are useful only to those who make them and to those who happen to work in the same field. What we need is a more broadly based understanding of man, one which has the potential of bridging several of the "lines marked off by academia." And, Burke argues, man-the-symbol-user provides such a definition: "But since man can't be called any of these various things except insofar as, encompassing the lot, he is the kind of animal that can haggle about the definitions of himself, in this sense he is what Ernst Cassirer has called the animal symbolicum . . ."[4] In defining man as the symbol-using animal we emphasize "two aspects of man: his animal nature, which grounds him

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[3]Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 23.

[4]Ibid.

in physical property; his rational nature, or symbol using capacity, and the differences that result from that."[5] We can, through this definition, look at man as a communicator, man as a political being, man as a social being, man as a psychological being, and man as a being in terms of any symbolic interaction patterning. Finally, this definition is "definitive" in that it provides man with a differentia from other beings and objects: "In brief, man differs qualitatively from other animals since they are too poor in symbolicity, just as man differs qualitatively from his machines, since these man-made caricatures of man are too poor in animality."[6]

But, for Burke "man as symbol user" is far too simple and incomplete. In a rare moment of directness, Burke provided a concise, if complex, statement of his full view of man. "Man is," he argues,

> the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal
> inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)
> separated from his natural condition by instruments of
> his own making
> goaded by a spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense
> of order)
> and rotten with perfection.[7]

As we explore the implications which Burke sees in this definition of man, we should temper any enthusiasm for over-explanation of closely

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[5]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 82. Nichols is not a symbolic interactionist herself, but she has done a significant amount of work in interpreting the writings of Kenneth Burke, who is one. When her writings are used in this study it is in reference to her work in interpreting Burke. See also, Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 275, and Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 63.

[6]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 64.

[7]Ibid., p. 16.

related concepts such as reality and meaning for later chapters. For the time, it will prove instructive to begin unfolding their nature in the rich mind of Burke.

THE SYMBOL-USING ANIMAL

Once we name man "symbol-user," we imply certain things about both the way that he uses symbols and the way that symbols "use him." First, we imply that man's understanding of reality must be tempered by his "tool" for understanding--his symbols. Burke comments:

> The "symbol-using animal," yes, obviously. But can we bring ourselves to realize just what that formula implies, just how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by "reality" has been built up for us through nothing but symbol systems? Take away our books, and what little do we know about history, biography, even something so "down to earth" as the relative position of seas and continents? What is our "reality" for today . . . but all this clutter of symbols about the past combined with whatever things we know mainly through maps, magazines, newspapers, and the like about the present? . . . And however important to us is the tiny sliver of reality each of us has experienced firsthand, the overall "picture" is but a construct of our symbol systems.[8]

So, for Burke, symbols determine, to a large extent, the reality each of us experiences. A second implication is an offshoot of the first: just as words provide man with a link to the nonsymbolic world, they also screen that world from him:

> Do we simply use words, or do they not also use us? An "ideology" is like a god coming down to earth, where it will inhabit a place pervaded by its presence. An "ideology" is like a spirit taking up its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways; and that same body would have hopped

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[8] Ibid., p. 5.

> around in different ways had a different ideology happened to inhabit it.[9]

But man is, parenthetically, also a symbol-making animal. He can name a "thing" whatever he wishes and, if the first name gets in the way he can re-name it. One of Burke's foremost interpreters, Hugh Duncan, suggests this third implication.

> . . . man, and man alone, creates the symbols he uses in communication. He is able not only to communicate, but to communicate about communication. No matter how "fixed" a meaning may be in ritual, magic, or tradition, it must always pass the test of relevance; that is, it must help men to deal with problems which arise as men act together. . . . Thus, while action may be fixed in tradition, it is fixed only so long as traditional forms of expression help us to organize activity in a present, just as utopian forms of expression are fixed as permanent goals only so long as they help to solve problems in the present.[10]

Fourth, symbol-using man does not flatter himself with such a definition. As Burke remarks,

> The designation of man as the symbol-using animal parallels the traditional formulas, "rational animal" and Homo sapiens--but with one notable difference. These earlier versions are honorific, whereas the idea of symbolicity implies no such temptation to self-flattery, and to this extent it is more admonitory.[11]

As he parenthetically remarks, man misuses symbols. Man is placed on no pedastal by virtue of his symbolicity--as we will well note in discussing Burke's final clause. Man can use his symbol power for good or evil, he may use them "accurately" or "inaccurately." The demagogue may, having become "more human" (presumably) with a greater development of symbol-using powers, dupe his constituents for his personal gain, But Burke

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[9] Ibid., p. 6.

[10] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 46-7.

[11] Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 9.

has more in mind than this:

> In referring to the misuse of symbols, I have in mind not only such demagogic tricks . . . I also think of "psychogenic illnesses," violent dislocations of bodily motion due to the improperly criticized action of symbolicity. A certain kind of food may be perfectly wholesome . . . But our habits may be such that it seems to us loathsome; and under those conditions, the very thought of eating may be nauseating to us.[12]

INVENTOR OF THE NEGATIVE

Burke places the origin of language in the negative. In a series of four exhaustive articles in the early 1950's,[13] Burke unfolded "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language," building upon the thesis that "The essential distinction between the verbal and the non-verbal is in the fact that language adds the peculiar possibility of the Negative."[14] There are no negatives in nature. Either there is a tree or there is not; the mongoose chases cobras or it fails to chase them. In either case something positive exists, and as far as nature is concerned, that is all that exists. As Burke explains it, "If I am expecting a certain situation, and a different situation occurs, I can say that the expected situation did not occur. But so far as the actual state of affairs is concerned, some situation positively prevails, and that's that."[15]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[13] See Kenneth Burke's "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language, Part One," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVIII (1952), pp. 251-64; "Part Two," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVIII (1952), pp. 446-60; "Part Three," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIX (1953), pp. 79-92; and "Postscripts on the Negative," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIX (1953), pp. 209-16. This series of articles is also reprinted in Language as Symbolic Action, pp. 418-79.

[14] Burke, "Part One," p. 251.

[15] Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, pp. 9-10.

The existence of the concept of the negative is entirely due to man's symbol systems. Thus, "the study of man as the specifically word-using animal requires special attention to this distinctive marvel, the negative."[16] We should, then, seek to uncover the importance of the negative to man and the manner in which man, through his languages, developed the negative.

Burke suggests five steps in the full development of the power of the negative in language. As there are no negatives in nature, and as language evolved from a "natural" state of no language, the first signs of the negative appeared in the form of "positive pre-negatives." Originally there was a purely "positive kind of negative, one closer to those conditions of nature in which there is no negative of the peculiarly linguistic sort."[17] Burke suggests that the primal ancestor of the rich negative was a sort of imperative or hortatory grunt, "a mere tonal gesture for calling-attention-to."[18] This sound probably came to have a "deterrent or perjorative meaning because the calling of attention to danger is of greater significance than the calling of attention just to something."[19] Such a sound would be translated as "beware!" or "caution!" But it did not constitute the language of a full-blown symbol system, for "it would not be a negative in the formal sense at all. But it would have the force of a negative command, insofar as it implied: 'Stop what

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[16]Burke, "Part One," p. 251.

[17]Ibid., p. 254.

[18]Ibid., p. 255.

[19]Ibid.

you're doing,' or 'Change your ways of doing what you're doing.'"[20]

Between this implied negative and the eventual explicit negative of command come two intermediate stages. First is an adaptation to ideas of fear. Second, a step involving words of doubt. Burke explains, ". . . terms for doubt would probably be the point at which the out and out propositional negative emerged. We mean that from this point on, the negative qua negative would be felt in a given linguistic system."[21] Again, "In brief, when you get to doubt, you're within the scientist area of information. So your next step is the outright No of 'negative propositions' that affirm a 'negative fact' (that is not a bird)."[22]

Though the boundary lines separating the various stages in the development of the negative are hazy, Burke's summary of those stages helps to clarify the central components of the stages:

> In analyzing the negative we arrive at these various distinctions:
>
> (1) Primitive positives, as with the animal taking what it wants.
>
> (2) Primitive negatives, as with the animal turning away from what it doesn't want, or what it wants but fears to take--or is "conditioned" not to take.
>
> Since (1) and (2) are aspects of "behavioristic pre-language," they are not bona fide positive and negative in the peculiarly linguistic sense. Indeed, the turning-away is as "positive" an operation as the "taking," so far as its sheer materiality is concerned.
>
> (3) There are rational or dramatist positives, in the sense that the intelligent carrying-out of an act for an intelligent purpose is positive.
>
> From the standpoint of (3) both (1) and (2) are called negative, insofar as "enslavement" to the "necessities" of "the senses" is a "negation" of "freedom."

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 256.

[22] Ibid.

> (4) There is the linguistic positive of words like stop, caution, look out, which have negative implications insofar as they are admonitory or deterrent in meaning. For such meanings can be phrased outright as negative command, once such a grammatical form is available.
>
> (5) There are the out-and-out negatives, ranging from "thou shalt not" to "it is not."
>
> And our main point is: Once the Perfect Negatives of (5) have taken form, their genius permeates the motivations of the other four. For instance, whereas one might otherwise want to treat "Yes" simply as a combination of primitive positives (1) and rational positives (3), we would admonish always to look for respects in which it might more accurately be treated as a negating of No.[23]

One more point needs to be mentioned before moving to the implications the negative has for man and language. Burke's negative is hortatory, not descriptive--it commands rather than simply announcing the presence or absence of something. It is, in effect, prior to the scientistic negative. Burke's investigation of the negative was stimulated by Henri Bergson,[24] whose approach emphasized the negative in terms of truth or falsity, is or is not--a scientistic approach. To Burke, though, "The negative begins not as a resource of definition or information, but as a command, as 'Don't.' Its more 'Scientistic' potentialities develop later. And whereas Bergson is right in observing that we can't have an 'idea of nothing' . . . I submit that we can have an 'idea of No,' an 'idea of don't.'"[25]

The richness of the negative as a linguistic resource can be seen

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[23]Ibid., p. 262.

[24]See Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, tr. Arthur Mitchell (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1911).

[25]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 10.

when we realize that it provides language (and, thus, man) with the ability to generalize and specify, to develop hierarchy, to reason, and to moralize.

First, the negative provides the power to generalize and to specify:

> Implied in the use of the negative, there is both the ability to generalize and the ability to specify. That is, you cannot use the negative properly without by the same token exemplifying the two basic dialectical resources of merger and division. For you can use no properly only insofar as you can classify under one head many situations that are, in their positive details, quite distinct from one another.[26]

However, classification and discrimination may exist beyond the realm of linguistic processes.

> The senses classify, when they "translate" some vibrations into terms of sound, others into terms of color, or record still others as smell, etc. And insofar as each biological organism selects a kind of food proper to its species, it is in effect discriminating . . .[27]

Both linguistically and sensorally we can classify--generalize and specify. But sensory abstraction yields simple positives--the color is red, the sound is loud, and so on. Dramatistic, or linguistic, generalization yields the "idea of the negative," the ability to judge yes and no in terms of right and wrong, not just in the sense of avoidances. The linguistic generalization involves choice based upon reasoned judgment; "Don't do that" does not result from mere "identification" of a thing, but from the realization that to do "that" would in some way be wrong.

Put another way, we can see the power of the linguistic negative in the distinction between image and idea. In that type of behavior which

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[26]Burke, "Part One," p. 256.

[27]Ibid.

has no language directly attached to it only the present can exist. Thus behaviorist pre-language, or the pre-linguistic identifications which can be interpreted as negatives, cannot involve expectation. There is, thus, a qualitative distinction between the sensory and the rational--the latter being rooted in the ideas of language. "Though idea and image have become merged in the development of language, the negative provides the instrument for splitting them apart. For the negative is an idea; there can be no image of it. But in imagery there is no negative."[28]

Because of the negative, then, we can generalize and specify in our system of symbols. Generalization and specification, in turn, imply the arrangement of hierarchies. Positives alone cannot produce hierarchies, for there would be no means of separating items into any sort of order. Only the negative can separate ideas, concepts, horses, students, or what have you, from each other. And only when a means for such separation is found can hierarchies be arranged. A preference for one thing implies a lack of preference for another.

And so for reason. At base, reason is the ability to use the negative qua negative.[29] Systems of reason are based in inclusion and exclusion, merger and division, generalization and specification. Such operations, again, require the presence of a linguistic negative.

But, perhaps most important, the negative allows for the development of ethics--value choices and moral choices. For Burke, man is not only the inventor of the negative, but he is also "moralized by the

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[28]Ibid., p. 260.

[29]Ibid., p. 261.

negative." "All definitions," he argues, "stressing man as a moral agent would tie in with this clause . . ."[30] He says in The Rhetoric of Religion,

> Action involves character, which involves choice--and the form of choice attains its perfection in the distinction between Yes and No (shall and shall-not, will and will-not). Though the concept of sheer motion is non-ethical, action implies the ethical, the human personality. Hence the obvious close connection between the ethical and negativity, as indicated in the Decalogue.[31]

The essence of the negative lies in the admonition of admonitions--the "thou-shalt-nots" of our world. Our maxims, mores, laws (which are presumably based in a moralistic judgement as to the "rightness" and "wrongness" of certain actions as they affect the community), and commandments would be nonexistent without the negative. We could, perchance, attempt to codify laws according to what citizens can do but such a code would take longer to read than most of us have moments to live. And, still, after we had drawn up the code there would be the implied negative of all those things we had left out. No, it is through the negative that we generalize those things we can do from the specification of those which we cannot; that we "choose the lesser of two evils;" that we reason to decide both whether a certain class of action is right or wrong (morally) and whether "this particular action" fits within that class.

Clearly, the negative is at the base of our language. Man is "inventor of the negative," the hortatory negative which gave rise to language. From this hortatory negative flowed the ability, through

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[30]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 11.

[31]This statement from Burke's Language as Symbolic Action is a slightly revised form of the original statement in his The Rhetoric of Religion (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 41.

symbol systems, for man to generalize and specify, to construct hierarchies, to choose, to reason, and to moralize. And from the hortatory negative came also the "is" of linguistic being, with its implication of the "is not" of not-being.

SEPARATED FROM HIS NATURAL CONDITION BY INSTRUMENTS OF HIS OWN MAKING

Burke explains, "This clause is designed to take care of those who would define man as the 'tool-using animal' . . . we are immediately reminded of the close tie-up between tools and language."[32] Language, though it may be a tool for man, is far more. It is the instrument that has separated man from the condition of nature. "Those who begin with the stress upon tools proceed to define language as a species of tool. But . . . we could not properly treat it as the essence of language. . . . Edward Sapir's view of language as 'a collective means of expression' points in a more appropriate direction."[33] Sapir argues,

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. . . . We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of

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[32]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 13.

[33]Ibid., p. 15.

> the community predispose certain choices of interpretation.[34]

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that the language we use structures, to a great extent, our ability to see and interpret "reality" helps to explain what Burke means when he says we are "separated from our natural condition" by language. As Whorf explains,

> It was found that the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. Formulation of ideas is not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense, but is part of a particular grammar, and differs, from slightly to greatly, between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages.[35]

Language separates man from his condition in nature by, at once, providing him a means of symbolizing nature ("reality") and setting up "terministic screens" which will to an extent distort the reality he interprets. The structure of a language, those elements which are particularly important to its grammar, quite naturally receive emphasis as the language-user

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[34]Edward Sapir, an introductory quotation to Benjamin Lee Whorf's "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," in Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf, ed. John Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1956), p. 134. Sapir's ideas on language are being included here because they closely parallel several of the symbolic interactionists' views of language. Sapir is not, however, a symbolic interactionist himself.

[35]Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics," in Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf, ed. John Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1956), pp. 212-13. Whorf's ideas are here included, although he is not a symbolic interactionist, because many of his statements about the nature of language closely parallel the symbolic interactionists' view of language.

interprets reality, for "any nomenclature necessarily directs the attention into some channels rather than others."[36]

This view, however, should not be taken to its logical extreme. For if language separates man from reality, it does not divorce him from it. Paul Kolers helps to bring the matter back into perspective:

> The point is that physical reality is immensely varied, far more varied than any language shows. The fact that each language has words for only a limited number of perceptions does not mean other perceptions are impossible. If that were the case, languages would never change.
>
> What a language does is group some aspects of reality together. . . .
>
> Language does not affect our capacity to perceive differences, but it does affect the likelihood that we will.[37]

That language can be used as a tool is not in dispute. One of its central functions--perhaps the central function as man intends its use--is as a tool for the communication of ideas. Burke concurs: "Language is a species of action, symbolic action--and its nature is such that it can be used as a tool."[38] But, as Ruth Nanda Anshen has suggested, "Language is not a mere mechanism, although it is also a mechanism and it is the relation of language as mechanism and language as meaning which must be sought."[39] And as Whorf's chief compiler, John Carroll, suggests,

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[36]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 45.

[37]Paul A. Kolers, "It Loses Something in the Translation," Psychology Today, May 1969, p. 32. Kolers, like Whorf, is not a symbolic interactionist, but his views of language are particularly instructive here.

[38]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 15.

[39]Ruth Nanda Anshen, "Language as Idea," Perspectives on Language, eds. John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 347. Anshen is here included, altnough she is not a symbolic interactionist, because this particular view of man's deep rooting in his linguistic powers closely parallels a similar view of the symbolic interactionists.

"linguistic structure predisposes the individual to pay attention to some things more than others, or to perceive things in one mode rather than in others, even though with respect to his general perceptual capacities, he is no different . . . from users of other languages."[40]

Language is man's invention. The instrument he has made has grown far beyond its original role as an instrument (or tool) for the communication of ideas, feelings, and information. It has grown to the point that, by its power to shape man's interpretation of reality, it has separated man from his natural condition.

GOADED BY THE SPIRIT OF HIERARCHY

We have already noticed, in unfolding the power of the negative in the development of language, that one of the features of any language system is its capacity to bring about generalization and specificity--its power to classify and to group. And we noticed that once man began the classification of "things" through language, he was only a short step away from arranging the classifications into hierarchies. In developing an ability to arrange ideas, items, or what have you, into hierarchies, language has in yet another way "taken a hold" on its inventor. For Burke, man does not simply use language to arrange things in hierarchies. Rather, he is "goaded" by the spirit of hierarchy. "Under this clause,

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[40]John B. Carroll, "The Linguistic Weltanschauung Problem," Perspectives on Language, eds. John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 289. Carroll's ideas are here included, although he is not a symbolic interactionist himself, because of his concern with "the way in which a language system organizes human experience"--a view which closely parallels the symbolic interactionists' perception of language. Note, for example, the close relationship between this view and Kenneth Burke's notion of "terministic screens."

of course, would fall the incentives of organization and status."[41] Language, we shall later notice in some detail, provides motives for man. It "needles" him, "cajoles" him, and, if you will, "goads" him. And because of its hierarchal nature, it goads him with the spirit of hierarchy.

ROTTEN WITH PERFECTION

One of the most important elements in Burke's writings is the principle of perfection. It is, parenthetically, also one of the most difficult to fully understand; for it has impact across the breadth of Burke's writings--but the impact is not always stated by Burke. To the issue at hand, though: we need first to understand the principle of perfection and then to understand the "rottenness" that is in man's quest for perfection. We may rely on Burke for both explanations.

The principle of perfection, he says, "is central to the nature of language as motive. The mere desire to name something by its 'proper' name, or to speak a language in its distinctive ways is intrinsically 'perfectionist.'"[42] The principle perhaps becomes clearer when Burke draws an analogy to

> the Aristotelian concept of "entelechy," the notion that each being aims at the perfection natural to its kind . . . Whereas Aristotle seems to have thought of all beings in terms of the entelechy (in keeping with the ambiguities of his term, kinesis, which includes something of both "action" and "motion"), we are confining our use of the principle to the realm of symbolic action."[43]

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[41]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 15

[42]Ibid., p. 16.

[43]Ibid., p. 17.

The principle of perfection, simply stated, argues that man attempts to move his symbol-using power, and his particular symbol systems, ever forward to the point where perfection can be achieved. Thus we seek to make things "perfectly clear," if only to ourselves. This principle of perfection is "implicit in the nature of symbol systems; and in keeping with his nature as a symbol-using animal, man is moved by this principle."[44]

One way in which the principle of perfection is used by man entails what Richard M. Weaver[45] calls the "God Term." Man makes linguistic hierarchies, terministic screens through which he channels his perceptions and toward which he channels his efforts at "making the world a better place." Once such a term is chosen, man channels great quantities of energy toward fulfilling that term. It is in this respect that the principle of perfection may make man "rotten".

> To get the point, we need simply widen the concept of perfection to the point where we can also use the term ironically, as when we speak of a "perfect fool" or a "perfect villain." And, of course, I had precisely such possibilities in mind when in my codicil I refer to man as being "rotten" with perfection.
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> The ironic aspect of the principle is itself revealed most perfectly in our tendency to conceive of a "perfect" enemy.[46]

The man who prizes "pride" above all else centers all his actions around that concept, attempting at every turn to increase his pride in himself

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regnery & Company, 1953). Weaver is not a symbolic interactionist, but his ideas concerning the inherent persuasiveness of language and the making of linguistically arranged hierarchies are closely paralleled in symbolic interaction theory.

[46] Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 18.

and the pride others feel for him. He may do this at the expense of what other persons around him might term "more pragmatic" or "more rational" or "less ridiculous" aspects of the situations he confronts. And, in this respect, Burke terms the ironic sense of the perfection principle the "dangerous sense."[47]

Man is rotten with perfection precisely because of this impulse. If we choose a "God Term"--say, progress--and give Burke a free hand with rhyme, we have his conception of the perfect extension (the perfect "perfection"?) of the principle of perfection:

> If all the thermo-nuclear warheads
> Were one thermo-nuclear warhead
> What a great thermo-nuclear warhead that would be.
>
> If all the intercontinental ballistic missiles
> Were one intercontinental ballistic missile
> What a great intercontinental ballistic missile that would be.
>
> If all the military men
> Were one military man
> What a great military man he would be.
>
> And if all the land masses
> Were one land mass
> What a great land mass that would be.
>
> And if the great military man
> Took the great thermo-nuclear warhead
> And put it into the great intercontinental ballistic missile
> And dropped it on the great land mass,
>
> What great PROGRESS that would be![48]

CONCLUSION

Much has been said about language in this chapter, but "man" has been the central concern. Man is so deeply grounded in the symbols he

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 22.

uses that it is nearly impossible to discuss "the nature of man" without in some way relating him to language. It is language usage that distinguishes man from the other beings: he is the symbol-using animal. He maintains control over his language system in that he "invents" the language that he uses. Conversely, though, he often becomes entrapped by the language that he has "invented." Man developed language after he learned to use the negative. Because the negative does not exist in nature, it imbues man's symbol system with an "unnatural" element. Part of the entrapment language places upon man is a limitation of his ability to "see nature as it is." Through the negative, the hierarchic motive has goaded man to such an extent that he is forever classifying those things in his environment. Such classifications lead inevitably to judgments of better and worse, right and wrong, or what have you. Thus, when man views his natural setting he views it through linguistic lenses that immediately make it "unnatural."

So, this is the symbolic interactionists' "man." He is screened from reality, yet he must interact with the reality he cannot clearly see. In the next three chapters we shall be exploring the implications of this view of man, attempting to determine the ways in which he does attempt to interact using a symbol system that prevents him from seeing things "as they naturally are."

Chapter 3

AGENCY AND SCENE: THE SOCIAL MEANING OF REALITY AS DETERMINED THROUGH LANGUAGE

The previous chapter was primarily concerned with the nature of man. But in unfolding the symbolic interactionists' view of man, mediated primarily through the writings of Kenneth Burke, it was necessary to preview a description of the nature of language. Simply put, when man is defined as the symbol-using animal, with the implications of this "naming" found in Burke's extended definition, a discussion of language is a prerequisite to understanding man. As Burke explains, in the study of man

> Language is taken as "the given." Man is viewed as the kind of animal that is distinguished by his prowess in symbolic action. . . . Just as, in being an animal that lives by locomotion, man moves not merely for purposes of acquisition or avoidance but also through the sheer delight in being free to move, so in being the typically symbol-using animal he takes a natural delight in the exercising of his powers with symbols.[1]

As von Humboldt has put it, "man is man by virtue of language."[2] Perhaps the centrality of language to an understanding of man was most

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[1]Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 295.

[2]Wilhelm von Humboldt, an introductory quotation to John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz, "Metalinguistics: Language in its Relations," in their Perspectives on Language (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 283. Von Humboldt is not a symbolic interactionist, but this particular view of the grounding of man in language is similar enough to the symbolic interactionists' ideas regarding the same issue to merit inclusion.

succinctly illustrated by Anshen: "For man is that being on earth who does not have language. Man is language."[3]

In this chapter two more terms of the pentad are examined: agency and scene. Language, man's agency, is clearly seen as a central concept in the theories of the symbolic interactionists. Scene provides the backdrop against which human action takes place. It is "scenic" reality which man interprets through his powers of language. Out of this interpretation of reality man brings meaning into his world. Language, then, is the key concept of the three to be considered in the ensuing pages: language, meaning, and reality. Reality, I will assert, has little social value for man except as it is linguistically interpreted. Meaning, on the other hand, is socially determined according to the linguistic interpretation of reality. For the symbolic interactionist, these three terms are so clearly intertwined that any true separation of them is quite difficult--bordering on artificiality. But such a separation needs to be made in order to understand more clearly the ways in which each of these three concepts operates as man goes about his daily business in a host of social situations.

LANGUAGE: THE PRIMARY AGENCY OF MAN

Man is the agent; he is thoroughly grounded in language, his primary agency. In discussing man, several aspects and functions of language were necessarily noted: its grounding in the negative, from which flows

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[3]Ruth Nanda Anshen, "Language as Idea," Perspectives on Language, eds. John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 347.

the moralizing power of language, its power of generalization and classification, which results in its ability to designate and arrange hierarchies; its nature as a tool or instrument for the communication of ideas; and its nature as a "shaper" of human perception. But we must now turn our attention even more directly to language in an attempt to explain more fully and understand more clearly the nature of the symbol system which is at the heart of the nature of man.

I will start from the position that language is "beyond" reality: it encompasses and aids in interpreting reality, but what Weaver terms the "divine element present in language"[4] gives it an element beyond dealings with physical reality. Otto Jepersen has argued,

> We shall never thoroughly understand the nature of language, if we take as our starting point the sober attitude of the scientifically-trained man of today, who regards the words he uses as a means for communicating, or maybe further developing, thought. To children and savages a word is something very different. To them, there is something magical or mystical in a name. It is something that has power over things and is bound up with them in a far more intimate manner than we are wont to imagine.[5]

How we name a thing can often control our reactions to it in future chance meetings with the thing; how we name a thing may come back to haunt us. In physical reality a tree may be a shade tree, but if we

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[4]Richard M. Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 148.

[5]Otto Jepersen, "Mysticism of Language," Perspectives on Language, eds. John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 20. Jepersen is here being included, although he is not a symbolic interactionist, because of his view regarding the ways in which the "names" we give things partially control our reactions to them. This view closely parallels a similar concept offered by the symbolic interactionists.

plant it believing that it is a fruit tree we will expect it to bear fruit. When it does not, our first reaction is likely to be that there is "something wrong" with the tree--it does not bear fruit. In reality there would be something wrong if it did. When we name a thing we begin acting towards it in accordance with the name, not in accordance with whatever it may, in physical reality, be. Our name for the thing has screened the physical reality from us. The name has, if you will, taken us "beyond reality." A story related by Whorf is instructive here:

> Thus, around a storage of what are called "gasoline drums," behavior will tend to be a certain type, that is, great care will be exercised; while around a storage of what are called "empty gasoline drums," it will tend to be different--careless, with little repression of smoking or of tossing cigarette stubs about. Yet the "empty" drums are perhaps the more dangerous, since they contain explosive vapor. Physically the situation is hazardous, but the linguistic analysis according to regular analogy must employ the word "empty," which inevitably suggests lack of hazard.[6]

Such a use of language, and the impact which it has regarding our actions toward the object we name, is inherent to symbol systems--we could not avoid this type of behavior even if we made such avoidance our principle goal. For, as Burke says,

> We must use terministic screens, since we can't say anything without the use of terms; whatever terms we use, they necessarily constitute a corresponding kind of screen; and any such screen necessarily directs the attention to one field rather than another.[7]

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[6]Benjamin Lee Whorf, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," in Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf, ed. John Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1956), p. 135.

[7]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 50.

The various languages which man has developed each directs attention to certain aspects of reality at the expense of others. Boas has shown this through a comparison of English and Indian grammars. He indicates that the phrase "the children are playing" would mean little to an Indian, though it gives a fairly concrete image to one using English grammar. Certain Indian tribes require much more specific information. For a clear picture, one might have to say to them "children (or child) whom I see here, are (or is, were or was) playing in the woods which I see here." For these Indian grammars location must be definite, but the number of children and the time they were playing is relatively unimportant.[8] The form of English grammar requires that certain categories be present in any clear description; some types of Indian grammars require that other categories be present. This aspect of language causes potential problems in communication, especially when persons whose categories are different attempt to converse. Anselm Strauss argues that when introduced "to a new terminology, the best you can do is draw upon possibly analogous experiences, and these may or may not lead to accurate conceptions."[9]

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[8]Franz Boas, "Language and Culture," Perspectives on Language, eds. John A. Rycenga and Joseph Schwartz (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 315. The ideas of Boas regarding the ways in which the forms of a language shape the meanings we can derive from its use are quite similar to certain views of language forms held by the symbolic interactionists--Burke in particular. For this reason his ideas have here been included in this study.

[9]Anselm L. Strauss, "Language and Identity," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 327. Strauss, known partly for his study of Mead, is considered a symbolic interactionist.

But this risk of inaccurate conceptions in "cross-cultural"[10] communication is one that must be accepted if a given linguistic community is to thrive. For a linguistic community to exist, for it to operate in anything approaching an efficient manner, it must develop a set of meanings which the members of that community can understand and react to in some coordinated fashion. Mills remarks, "Men discern situations with particular vocabularies, and it is in terms of some delimited vocabulary that they anticipate consequences of conduct."[11] Such common meanings associated with a particular linguistic grouping make social order possible. Foote explains why such common meanings are critical to the progression of community life:

> Without the binding thread of identity, one could not evaluate the succession of situations. Literally, one could say there would be no value in living, since value only exists or occurs relative to particular identities--at least value as experienced by organisms which do not live in the mere present, as animals presumably do, devoid of self and unaware of impending death. Moreover, it is only through identification as the sharing of identity that individual motives become social values and social values, individual motives.[12]

In a given linguistic grouping, the name one gives an object "provides

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[10]The term "cross-cultural" is here meant to refer to different linguistic groupings, not just ethnic or national boundaries. Thus, studying the attempts at communication between a Puerto Rican sub-group and an Irish sub-group in New York could be considered a "cross-cultural" study.

[11]C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 357. Mills is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

[12]Nelson Foote, "Identification as the Basis for a Theory of Motivation," American Sociological Review, XVI (1951), p. 20. Foote is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

a directive for action, as if the object were forthrightly to announce, 'You say I am this, then act in the appropriate way toward me.'"[13]

At base, then, language contains a powerful element which shapes the reality man sees and shapes the possibilities of his reaction to that reality. How we define a situation pre-sets, to a large extent, the way that we will act towards it.[14] Our language, then, limits our ability to include a sufficient number of elements in the definition of any situation to come anywhere near approaching the "physical reality" of the situation we are defining.

A second important feature of language is its ambiguity. Ambiguity in language allows the symbol-user to generalize and to place "reality" into linguistic categories. Without such facility, man could have no "communication" in the real sense, for a word which is barren of ambiguity has little chance of operating as a symbol which more than one person can understand and attach meaning to. All ambiguity could not be removed from language, says Winterowd, because

> no two men have exactly the same tools for perception, and if they did have, they would not have the same conditioning. Simply, each would have had different experiences with dogs during lives that, no matter how similar in some respects, were different in important and fundamental ways. If language were not to a

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[13]Strauss, "Language and Identity," p. 326.

[14]An interesting application of this idea is reported by Strauss, Ibid., p. 325. He says that for the Laplanders a single word encompasses "people" and "reindeer." He explains that the life of the Laplander is so directly tied to the reindeer that the people consider the animals an inseparable part of them. He asks, "Is a reindeer a human or is a human a reindeer?"

> high degree ambiguous, we could not communicate, for DOG would mean to you only a given animal in a given place.[15]

Were language not ambiguous, we would need a different word ("name") for each object we experience each time we experience it. Thus, to pursue Winterowd's example, each dog would need a different word for identification, as would each other individual animal, each individual plant, individual human, etc. And thought, as we know it, could not proceed; for thought, reason, communication, and what have you are made possible only through the process of generalization and classification.

The ambiguity of language leads to a third feature, that which Weaver calls its "sermonic"[16] nature. Winterowd argues "no language--not even the language of mathematics ($E = MC^2$)--is neutral."[17] Indeed,

> Language is persuasive almost willy-nilly, simply because it is language. Try as we may, we cannot frame an utterance in such a way that it will be totally informative or totally affective. Whenever we use language, we are using persuasion. Even nonsense syllables, as long as we interpret them as language of some kind, work their persuasive magic.[18]

Because language mirrors man, the actor, it is naturally full of emotional overtones. Marie Nichols brings home Burke's point on the matter:

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[15]W. Ross Winterowd, Rhetoric: A Synthesis (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 8.

[16]For an excellent treatment of the emotive power of language, see Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," in Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 163-79.

[17]Winterowd, Rhetoric: A Synthesis, p. 2.

[18]Ibid., p. 4.

> Hence, from its beginning it has been marked by the weightings and emotional loadings that characterize human activity in general. In other words, neither in its beginnings nor at any time has language been a neutral instrument. Language is an act upon a scene; it contains the colorings of human purpose, choice, feeling. It is now as it has always been, an adjunct of action, a way of encompassing situations.[19]

This proposition regarding the inherent persuasiveness of language is a corollary to the previous discussion of naming. How we name a thing sets in action the response that we will take to it. In the words of Burke, " . . . speech in its essence is not neutral. Far from aiming at suspended judgment, the spontaneous speech of a people is loaded with judgments."[20] Indeed, language is full with

> implicit exhortations. To call a man a friend or an enemy is per se to suggest a program of action with regard to him. An important ingredient in the meaning of such words is precisely the attitudes and acts which go with them.[21]

In Chapter Two language was found to have originated in the negative. Specifically, language systems began to develop as man grasped the admonitory negative. Such a negative is profoundly moralistic and, in providing the base from which language developed it infused the entire system of language with this moralistic nature. Language is, like the earliest form of the negative, hortatory: " . . . the spontaneous symbols of communication are hortatory, suggestive, hypnotic."[22]

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[19]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 83.

[20]Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 176-77.

[21]Ibid., p. 77.

[22]Ibid., p. 54.

In these few pages, additional development of the symbolic interactionists' view of language has revealed the powerful force of language's naming function, the necessary ambiguity of symbol systems, and the natural persuasiveness of the word. In the previous chapter we noticed that language, grounded in the negative, has a powerful moralizing force, clears the way--through its form--for the arrangement of hierarchies, provides us a means for communicating ideas, and goes a long way to shape human perceptions. It is, indeed, a central concept in the study of man; language is the basic element which separates man from the other animals. It is man's primary agency for the conduct of his affairs.

MEANING: THE BASIS FOR HUMAN ACTION

Language qua language does little for man, though. It is only after man has assigned a meaning to the words he utters and hears that the words have significant impact upon him. A Russian and an American, each understanding only his own native tongue, may talk to each other in their own languages but the words they exchange are unlikely to have much impact on them. An understanding of the meaning of the words the other is using is essential to significant human communication. Therefore, given our view of language, we shall now attempt to discover the form that meaning takes in the human mind, how meaning is developed in man, and whether one interpretation of a given situation can be considered any more "correct" than another. Each of these issues is central to any theory of meaning, and each will add to the groundwork necessary for the development of a theory of rhetoric based upon the symbolic interactionists' point of view.

To begin: meaning does not reside in any object. The object is,

of course, "out there" in some form, but it has meaning to man only as man (or men) may happen to interpret it. The environment has meaning for us, says Burke, only after we mediate that part of it which we receive. This is so because

> Stimuli do not possess an absolute meaning. Even a set of signs indicating the likelihood of death by torture has another meaning in the orientation of a comfort-loving skeptic than it would for the ascetic whose world-view promised eternal reward for martyrdom. Any given situation derives its character from the entire framework of interpretation by which we judge it.[23]

In fact, for the symbolic interactionist meaning exists only in the relationship between an object and its interpreter. The example of value-assignment, as explained by Strauss, makes this clear: "Value is not an element; it has to do with a relation between the object and the person who has experiences with the object. . . . the 'essence' or 'nature' of the object resides not in the object but in the relation between it and the namer."[24]

However, it is the observer--the man, if you will--that determines the meaning of the relation between himself and the object. From this statement it is only a short step to the nature of meaning when two people are involved in interaction, rather than when one person is involved with an object. In conversation, two symbol-users are interacting. Again, the meaning of the interaction exists in the relation between the two. But also, again, the meaning is interpreted by each person as he acts in the role of receiver. Should there be a difference in meaning

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[23]Ibid., p. 35.

[24]Strauss, "Language and Identity," p. 327.

as perceived by one person in the role of "sending" and another in the role of "receiving," the latter has control of the meaning of the situation for him. Reverse the two roles and the other person determines the meaning of the situation for himself. Each person, then, can determine the meaning of the situation, as each is a symbol-user, but the perceptions of one need not mirror the perceptions of the other--and indeed they probably do not.

Now we consider the manner by which an individual determines the meaning that an object or situation has for him. Two factors, language and society, cast primary influence upon his choices in assigning meaning.

Basically, language is the means used to interpret meaning. Language is the vehicle of meaning. Hugh Duncan maintains that "meaning . . . is usually studied through the interpretation of symbols, for it is only in symbols that meaning (as attention and intention) can be observed."[25] Indeed, because language is the primary vehicle of interpersonal communication, it is only through language that shared meanings are made possible (even "body language," as we assign meaning to it in thought, is mediated through the linguistic equivalents of given movements); and without shared meanings there would be no real possibility of communication. Again we look to Duncan for the explanation:

> Words become names, and, in so doing, fix social meanings. In the meeting and response of conversation, relationships emerge which endure only so long as the self and the other continue in dialogue. . . . We are not solitary selves who "decide" what to say, and then find meaning in this decision. Nor are we determined selves wholly formed by forces in nature

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[25]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 5.

> and society. The reality in which we live is the reality of the named relations between the things of the world and man, as well as between man and man.[26]

And, the way in which communication spurs the development of meaning is made clear by social psychologists Stone and Farberman: "Specifically, the problem of personal meaning lies in the forefront of our conversation and gives it relevance. Meaning, however, can only be established in communication."[27]

But society also helps to provide individuals with a way of determining meaning. The values of the group often become the values of specific individuals who enter the group; or, at times the disenchanted may be guided to new meanings out of a rejection of the values that society holds. These societal values, of course, are formed from the individual values of a large number of its members. Rose makes the nature of society more graphic:

> . . . society is more than a collection of individuals: it is a collection of individuals with a culture, which has been learned by symbolic communication from other individuals back through time, so that the members can gauge their behavior to each other and to the society as a whole.[28]

The symbolic interactionists reject the view of man put forth by the existentialists. Man is not alone in the world, uninfluenced by other men. Indeed, as Blumer indicates, "group life consists of the association

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[26]Ibid., pp. 103-4.

[27]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Introduction," in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 2.

[28]Arnold Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in his Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), pp. 8-9.

of . . . reacting organisms."[29] Each man is influenced in some way by each other man with whom he holds conversation (even if that conversation is only "in the mind"). Thus, each man is influenced in his assignment of meanings by the people with whom he comes in contact. These significant others, when they form the community an individual belongs to, provide the societal background which impinges upon the individual as he gives meaning to his world. In the words of Natanson, "Apart from society, there can be . . . no community of understanding."[30] In this way society contributes to the individual's assignment of meaning to situations, and the individual contributes to the establishment of socially held meanings.

Now, recall for a moment the discussion of language in which I asserted that only through ambiguity was language capable of allowing classification and, thus, providing a means for communication. Ambiguity in language, of course, refers to ambiguity in the meaning of language. And, as we noted in the earlier discussion,

> obscurity and ambiguity must not be explained away as meaningless, either because of difficulty of interpretation or subjectivity. A symbol is "meaningless" only because we do not know how to interpret it . . . And perhaps it is the ambiguity of symbols which makes them so useful in human society. Ambiguity is a kind of bridge that allows us to run back and forth from one kind of meaning to another, until we take firm resolve to cross the bridge into new, and fixed, meanings.[31]

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[29]Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," American Journal of Sociology, LXVI (1966), p. 535.

[30]Maurice Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead (Washington, D.C.: The Public Affairs Press, 1956), p. 7. Though Natanson would probably not be termed a symbolic interactionist now, his work is included because he is here providing an interpretation of George Herbert Mead.

[31]Duncan, Symbols in Society, pp. 7-8.

Given the ambiguity of language and the "interpreter-centered" understanding of meaning, it becomes clear that there are no "set" or "correct" meanings in the symbolic interactions of man. It is true, of course, that each of us may intend that our meanings be accepted as correct; and it may be true that some statements may be more clearly accurate in their description of some object or event than others. But, it is also true that the "others" who confront each of us with slightly different meanings than our own have the same "I am right" view. As each person necessarily determines what a given situation means to him in terms of his background and experiences, and any pressures or whims of the moment, only he can determine whether or not his interpretation of the situation is--in terms of his momentary state--"correct" or not. We should not press this issue too far, for in a way the social semanticists are arguing from a strong position when they say that we should "think through" situations, taking the time to consider alternative interpretations, before we react to them (draw meaning from them). But, regardless of what we should do, it is clear that the individual is free (insofar as his terministic screens allow freedom) to draw whatever meaning from a situation that he might choose.[32] As Burke puts it,

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[32]A friend was once involved in an incident which can perhaps help to illustrate this point. He had just moved into a house in a neighborhood foreign to him. His bedroom was at one end of the upstairs hallway, his baby's room was across the hall, and there was a window at their end of the hall. Just outside the baby's room sat a bust of the David atop a column. Shortly after moving into the house he was awakened one night by some sort of noise. In his sleepy state he glanced out the door and saw what appeared to be the shadow of a man next to the baby's room. Thinking that an intruder had entered the house he bound from the bed and tackled the first man-like figure he saw--the bust. The shadow he had seen, of course, was that of the bust. The moonlight coming through the hallway window was at just the right angle to make the bust appear to be a man, given the friend's sleepy state. The meaning he drew from the situation was reality to him. And, acting on the basis of that reality his reaction was quite appropriate. In reality, there was no intruder. But in his symbolic reality, there was.

> Distinctions between emotion and logic, intuition and reason, however well they may serve in other connections, need not concern us here. It was intuitive of the flock to fly when one of its members flew--and it was also quite logical of them to do so. They had responded to a character of events in a way which, generally speaking, assists in preserving them--and I cannot conceive of anything more logical, even though the one bird that set them off may have been wrong or perverse.[33]

Meaning, then, should be understood as a process controlled by the individual symbol-user in his role as perceiver. Meaning is derived from his interpretation of the relationship between himself and an object or person and, in the final analysis, only he can determine whether he has drawn the "correct" or appropriate meaning from the situation.

REALITY: THE STONE BEFORE THE SCULPTOR

Reality is the scene upon which human action takes place. It should be clear by now, however, that man does not act in response to all of the things that objectively exist "out there." Rather, he reacts only to those parts of the total real world that come into his social world; he reacts only toward those things which have meaning for him. Thus, much of what will be "named" as the components and nature of reality can be directly implied from the preceding sections. But because scene plays a relatively important role in the total theory of Burke and some of the other symbolic interactionists, additional development seems in order.

Our starting point is reality[34] and our basic assertion will be

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[33]Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 84.

[34]To this point we have enclosed the term "reality" in quotation marks, in an attempt to hold off assumed definitions of the word. Having arrived at the part of this chapter where definitions will be specified, the quotation marks will now be removed.

that so far as man, symbol-user, in society is concerned only symbolic reality is meaningful. It is beyond dispute, of course, that there are real, concrete objects "out there." But these objects have no meaning for man except through the interpretation he puts on them--an interpretation mediated through his control over language. Duncan maintains that

> Nature may exist "outside of" human perception, or be subject to "immutable laws" which we can know but cannot change, but in so far as we communicate about nature, we do so through symbols which we do create, and do change. This is not to say that nature and symbols are the same. . . . But as we symbolize nature we make it a scene or stage upon which we enact our drama of social order. Thus, the environment of man is a symbolic environment.[35]

A tree (in nature) naturally casts a shadow when light hits it. This shadow is something that can provide protection for man in the heat of the day, for it provides a shield against the sun. In this "role" the tree is said to provide shade. But, though the tree and the shadow be real, the shadow does not take on the meaning of "cool" or "protection" until the man realizes, symbolically, that it can serve this function. Until such a realization occurs, there is only the physical reality of a tree casting a shadow. Much in the same way, argues Mead, "the form has no meaning" in mechanical science.[36] It only exists waiting for man to determine its meaning.

Again, we can talk about reality only after it has been mediated through language; and we can never discuss all that there is about an

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[35]Duncan, Symbols in Society, pp. 70-1.

[36]George Herbert Mead, "Evolution Becomes a General Idea," George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology, ed. Anselm Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 8.

object in nature, nor can we even know all that there is about the object because of the terministic screens which language places between us and the object. Duncan explains that

> the purely formal aspect of a symbol system (whether mathematical or linguistic) in which we "report" what we have observed about human relationships, will determine what we can "report" about what we have observed, just as it determines what we have observed, for it is only as we name things and events that we can relate to them as social beings.[37]

He continues, "When we say that there is some reality in human relationships which lies 'beyond' symbols, we are still bound by symbols in our 'report' of the operations of the 'extrasymbolic' phenomena we have observed."[38]

Psychologist Fritz Heider, though not necessarily working from the standpoint of symbolic interaction, provides an explanation of the stages involved in the perception of a real object, the way in which it is altered as the person forms his impressions of it. The explanation, in addition, seems to mesh quite well with other assumptions of the symbolic interactionists. According to Heider there are five stages involved as the individual interprets reality: the distal stimulus (the object "out there"), a mediation by sound or light waves, a proximal stimulus (the object after outside mediation), an internal mediation in which the person's constructs further "distort" the distal stimulus, and,

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[37]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 51.

[38]Ibid.

finally, a percept--the individual's impression of the distal stimulus.[39] The two mediating processes necessarily change the object from its natural state to something quite different as it is finally perceived. It is in the second mediating stage that language--terministic screens--begin to pick and choose the parts of the objective reality which will make their way into the percept. Thus we change what is in nature as we bring it into our consciousness. As Burke puts it, "Even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality."[40] Different people develop different meanings from the "same" "reality" due to the different focuses which they place upon it. Thus, for Blumer, "It follows that objects vary in their meaning. A tree is not the same object to a lumberman, a botanist, or a poet; a star is a different object to a modern astronomer than it was to a sheep-herder of antiquity . . ."[41]

As far as man is concerned, then, reality is a symbolic phenomenon:

> We discern situational patterns by means of the particular vocabulary of the cultural group into which we are born. Our minds, as linguistic products, are composed of concepts (verbally molded) which select certain relationships as meaningful. Other groups may select other relationships as meaningful. These relationships are not realities, they are interpretations of reality--hence different

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[39]Fritz Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 22-7. Although I have never seen Heider classified as a symbolic interactionist, many of his views about the ways in which man perceives his surroundings do parallel the ideas of the symbolic interactionists. If he does not fully fit with all the symbolic interaction views of man in society, he does subscribe to enough of them that I feel comfortable in including his work.

[40]Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 45.

[41]Blumer, "Sociological Implications," p. 539.

> frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality is.[42]

Weaver argues that "knowledge of the prime reality comes to man through the word; the word is a sort of deliverance from the shifting world of appearances."[43] Man does contact reality, but as Heider's system indicates, he perceives very little of what is "environmental reality." The extent to which language shapes our understanding of reality is revealed by Burke in a particularly succinct passage:

> . . . can we bring ourselves to realize just how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by "reality" has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol systems? Take away our books, and what little do we know about history, biography, even something so "down to earth" as a relative position of seas and continents? What is our "reality" for today . . . but all this clutter of symbols about the past, combined with whatever things we know mainly through maps, magazines, newspapers, and the like about the present? . . . The various courses in the curriculum are in effect but so many terminologies.[44]

According to Duncan, Mead called symbols the observable facts of sociation. His description of the act was "in terms of significant symbols, an act whose beginning is determined by imagery of its end, places symbols within the act."[45] This makes symbols the equivalent of reality and experience, so far as the act is concerned.

Further, as man has the power to change his language system to eliminate symbols that are no longer needed and to invent those new symbols which can help interpret new developments which affect him, man

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[42] Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 35.

[43] Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences, p. 149.

[44] Burke, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 5.

[45] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 93.

can also change his view of reality as conditions change. Berger and Luckmann argue:

> It follows that relations with others in the face-to-face situation are highly flexible. Put negatively, it is comparatively difficult to impose rigid patterns upon face-to-face interaction. Whatever patterns are introduced will be continuously modified through the exceedingly variegated and subtle interchange of subjective meanings that goes on. For instance, I may view the other as someone inherently unfriendly to me and act toward him within a pattern of "unfriendly relations" as understood by me. In the face-to-face situation, however, the other may confront me with attitudes and acts that contradict this pattern, perhaps up to a point where I am led to abandon the pattern as inapplicable and to view him as friendly.[46]

In other words, as situations change and additional information is accepted and interpreted by man through his symbol system what he formerly perceived as the reality of a situation is changed.

From this view of reality as symbolic we can move easily into a brief consideration of a closely linked term--knowledge. Just as we concluded that reality is socially determined according to symbol systems, we can argue that knowledge is so determined. For at base knowledge is simply the cognizance that we have of the reality around us. In a way, once we have defined reality for man as symbolic reality, we may be a bit redundant to talk about knowledge. Berger and Luckmann agree: "the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality."[47] And, just as the reality of a situation may

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[46]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 30. Sociologists Berger and Luckmann are, in this book, tying together the ideas of Mead and Durkheim. As they explain in a rather long footnote to the introduction, they are attempting to integrate the thinking of the symbolic interactionist school to the sociology of knowledge.

[47]Ibid., p. 3.

appear different to two different persons, so may the knowledge they gain from it:

> Sociological interest in questions of "reality" and "knowledge" is thus initially justified by the fact of their social relativity. What is "real" to a Tibetan monk may not be "real" to an American businessman. The "knowledge" of the criminal differs from the "knowledge" of the criminologist. It follows that specific agglomerations of "reality" and "knowledge" pertain to specific social contexts . . .[48]

CONCLUSION

For the symbolic interactionist both reality and meaning collapse back into language: reality exists in nature, and it is the backdrop against which man acts. But this backdrop is linguistically mediated by each person as he acts, and he "performs the script" according to his own interpretation of it. He cannot totally ignore the realities that impinge upon him, but he does make significant changes in them as he sorts them through the terministic screens that guide his thought. The same tree, or rock, or bird, or person may have a different meaning for a person each time he encounters it in a given situation. Thus, though the object may remain pretty much the same in nature, it does change in the minds of the social beings who act in response to it. In a phrase, not only is man deeply grounded in language, but so is his interpretation of all that goes on about him.

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[48] Ibid.

Chapter 4

ACT: THE ULTIMATE REDUCTION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Whenever man undertakes purposive, mediated behavior he is acting. The act is a great unifying concept in the study of man: both the baseball player attempting to steal a base and the young lover attempting to "get to first base" are involved in action; so with the marble shooter who has laid his marbles "on the line" and is attempting to save them--and with the psychiatrist who is trying to save someone else's. We may study man from the standpoint of action in such a variety of situations and behavior patterns that a lifetime of cataloging them would provide only a fractional part of what might eventually be the total list. But just as the act is a unifying concept for the study of man, so is it a concept which divides the study of man from the study of most other beings, objects, and "things." Man acts with purpose. He undertakes a given behavior in response to a problematic situation. His action is, thus, mediated by thought processes. When a man rises it is because he has willed the action; when bread rises it is the result of an "unminded" chemical process.

To the symbolic interactionist, action is the adaptation of an organism to its environment. When the adapting organism is human, the actor is a determining agent. The human organism can add the element of determination, or willing, because of his grasp of the symbolic process. His language allows him to observe his situation, mediate it via comparisons with past experiences, test possible responses through

that process which is so fully human, thought, and finally take some sort of observable (or unobservable) action as a response. It is this linguistic element, or symbolic action, which provides a differentiation between man and other animals. We need not introduce language to draw a difference between the action of a man and the motion of a bit of bread dough, but we do need the element of language to clearly distinguish man's actions from those of "higher" animals. Pavlov's dogs made an automatic response to a stimulus, much as early man must have responded to the warning signal Burke calls a "primordial grunt." But man's response, given a grasp of language, is far more complex. The idea is made clear by Meltzer: "All human activity other than reflex and habitual action is built up in the process of its execution; i.e., behavior is constructed as it goes along, for decisions must be made at several points. The significance of this fact is that people act--rather than merely reacting."[1] As sociologists Stone and Farberman maintain, "Symbolic interactionists repudiate the notion that man is a passive, neutral agent, pushed one way or another by external or internal forces. Man is both actor (the "I") and acted upon (the "me"), both subject and object."[2]

MAN AS THE CONTROLLER OF ACTION

Basic to the symbolic interactionist's view of action is the belief

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[1]Bernard N. Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 17.

[2]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Directions," in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 18.

that man ultimately maintains control over his actions. This control begins with his selection of specific goals for a given act; human action begins in purpose. Psychiatrist David Levy maintains that all men may be thought of as

> goal determined organisms, initiating goals and driven by goals. It may be assumed that animals are likewise so constituted, the difference being that in human behavior the goals are more numerous and more complex, more self-determined, and achieved by the use of instruments that belong to an order of symbolic thinking unknown in the animal world.[3]

That this view of goal-directed human behavior is deeply rooted in symbolic interactionist thinking is made clear by Stone and Farberman. In their tracing of these roots they argue

> In his review of pragmatism, Durkheim observed that Peirce, James, Schiller, and Dewey were in agreement: no exterior, impersonal, and complete truth, irrespective of its source (intellection or sensory perception) could be a living and compelling truth without taking the realm of goals, means, and choices (the realm of human purpose) into account. In fact, to conceive truth as "given," i.e., "out there," divorces it from human life and action.[4]

Man, at base, is in control of his actions--both his interactions with other men and his action with regard to pnysical reality. As Stone and Farberman put it, "man is front stage center." The universe is inherently

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[3]David M. Levy, "The Act as a Unit," Psychiatry, XXV (1962), p. 295.

[4]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "On the Edge of Reapproachment: Was Durkheim Moving Toward the Perspective of Symbolic Interaction?" in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 107.

> meaningless and totally indifferent to the existence of man. While it conditions, it does not determine. Indeed, the universe presents itself as an occasion for man's creative capacities. It is there. It awaits his investiture of identity, meaning, value, sentiments, and rules. It is a convertible commodity--a taken, not a given; a concept, not a datum.[5]

Man, it is true, adapts to his environment. But the reverse is not true, except as man attempts to make the environment adapt to him. As Mead maintains, "in the case of the human form, of human society, we have that adaptation expressing itself in a very high degree of control."[6] Stone and Farberman illustrate the uniqueness of man's method of adaptation:

> Man's particular style of reactivity is qualitatively different from that of lower forms. Only man reaches the stage of actual symbolic behavior where he gains freedom from the intrinsic properties of the universe. The point is reached in symbolic behavior where individuals respond to arbitrary designations of their own creation that stand for things but bear no intrinsic relationship to them--such as the American flag, and the American Republic.[7]

Indeed,

> For better or for worse, man is the locus of purpose and power. He is the reality maker and the reality breaker. He alone is engaged in the "politics of reality." . . . But no matter what, it will be man who creates, sustains, and changes meaning.[8]

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[5]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Social Process as Symbolic Transformation," in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 89.

[6]George Herbert Mead, "The Problem of Society--How We Become Selves," George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology, ed. Anselm Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 31.

[7]Stone and Farberman, "Social Process as Symbolic Transformation," p. 90.

[8]Ibid., p. 89.

Human action begins with the setting of goals and it is man who sets those goals. It involves an adaptive response to an environment. He both chooses that response and determines the nature of the environment through the assignment of meaning to it. Man is, in point of fact, the final determiner of his actions. Outside forces may impinge upon him and, to some extent, influence his choices, but they never take away from him completely the element of choice.

THE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISTS' VIEW OF THE ACT

Traditionally, sociologists have approached the concept of human action in terms of social structures. By and large, they have tended to use "pigeon holes" consisting of various forms of social organizations and structures when considering the act; they have analyzed the act by first attempting to fit particular acts into these pigeon holes and then evaluating these acts on the basis of pre-set theories about each pigeon hole. What this amounts to, claims Blumer, is placing the human act in a secondary position.

> By and large, of course, sociologists do not study human society in terms of its acting units. Instead, they are disposed to view human society in terms of structure or organization and to treat social action as an expression of such structure or organization. . . . These various lines of sociological perspective and interest, which are so strongly entrenched today, leap over the acting units of a society and bypass the interpretative process by which such acting units build up their actions.[9]

This treatment, of course, is quite far from the approach of the symbolic interactionists. Blumer, Mead, and other such theorists place

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[9]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 146.

the act in a primary position and analyze individual and societal actions in a more situational context. Blumer maintains that this is especially necessary in modern, complex societies. In these societies, as the

> streams of new situations arise and old situations become unstable, the influence of organization decreases. One should bear in mind that the most important element confronting an acting unit in situations is the actions of other acting units. In modern society, with its increasingly criss-crossing of lines of action, it is common for situations to arise in which the actions of participants are not previously regularized and standardized. To this extent, existing social organization does not shape the situation.[10]

The social lessons of the 1960's and early 1970's should make this clear. Groups faced with unresponsive power structures abandoned the established and formalized methods of social communication and social change, turning instead to fresh action responses to the situations that confronted them. To attempt analysis of these uncharted responses in terms of established social patterns has proven fruitless. For these situations, as for most others, the symbolic interactionist would surely maintain that the best means of analysis would be one that featured the inter-actions of the acting units. Thus, at base, the symbolic interactionist views human action in terms of the individual actor or groups of actors responding to specific environmental matrices.

Further, these theorists reject the notion that only "action" can be considered as an act and that the verbal attachment to the act is an entirely different matter. C. Wright Mills explains, "we need not treat an action as discrepant from 'its' verbalization, for in many cases, the verbalization is a new act. In such cases, there is not a discrepancy

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[10] Ibid., p. 147.

between an act and 'its' verbalization, but a difference between two disparate actions, motor-social and verbal."[11] In addition, as Rose argues, symbols may be considered as incipient acts.

> A symbol is an incipient or telescoped act, in which the later stages--involving elements of both meaning and value--are implied in the first stage. Thus, the symbol "chair" implies the physical comfort, the opportunity to do certain things which can best be done while sitting, and other similar "outcomes" of sitting in a chair. It should be understood, as Mead points out, that "language does not simply symbolize a situation or object which is already there in advance; it makes possible the existence or the appearance of that situation or object, for it is a part of the mechanism whereby the situation or object is created."[12]

In other words, talking about doing a deed is, in and by itself, a deed.[13]

The "interactionist", then, puts the act in the primary position as he views society. His method calls for the analysis of one act in terms of its response or responsiveness to another act. The "symbolic" interactionist considers the symbolic act on an equal plane with the physical act. They are different, possibly, in terms of their form but not in terms of their impact on social situations.

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[11]C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 359.

[12]Arnold Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in his Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 5.

[13]This is not a view that predominates in our society. News reports are full of complaints that "the President never does anything, he just talks about it." But in terms of social analysis, when the President does talk about it he is, in fact, doing something. The very presence of the talk indicates that, at the very least, the problem being considered is one that has commanded his attention and toward which he is directing attempted solutions.

THE STAGES OF THE ACT

Though the act is a process with no clear beginning and no clear end--one act may call out a response which is another act, and the "end" of one may be the "beginning" of the other--there are certain identifiable stages that a person goes through in performing acts. Mead's definition of an act, as related here by Levy, clearly indicates the presence of such stages:

> We may define the act as the ongoing behavior of the individual, initiated by a want and directed to the end of satisfying that want through the use of suitable elements in the environment. In any act, the end is that which determines the direction of the activity, and which is present in the beginning as a control, defining the want and regulating its expression. This constitutes the act as teleological activity.[14]

The act, further, contains all of those elements of human perception and thought which psychologists have uncovered, but as Meltzer claims it contains them in a slightly different way. As one would expect, the process emphasis of the symbolic interactionist tends to mesh these elements closely together:

> Within the act, all the separated categories of the traditional, orthodox psychologies find a place. Attention, perception, imagination, reasoning, emotion, and so forth, are seen as parts of the act--rather than as more or less extrinsic influences upon it. Human behavior presents itself in the form of acts, rather than of concatenations of minute responses.[15]

The symbolic interactionist meshes all of these processes into four stages, each of which can probably be identified in a given act but which overlap severely as the act develops. As Levy maintains, the act should

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[14]Levy, "The Act as a Unit," pp. 295-6.

[15]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," p. 17.

be considered as a unit, but for purposes of analysis four parts can be identified. Mead, in his major treatise on the act, identifies these four steps as impulse, perception, manipulation, and consummation.[16]

The impulse, according to Pfuetze, is the "felt want or the feeling of incompletion projecting the need of the organism into the environment, relating the organism to the environment both selectively and then responsively, both actively and passively."[17] As such, the impulse operates as an antenna--keeping the organism alert and searching out from the world of real objects those "stimuli" which are relevant to the organism's continuing emergence and interaction with its environment. Natanson maintains that impulse "appears to be not the sensory content of experience, not sense data, but the attitude of the organism to the initial stimulus in so far as that attitude does not involve overt activity."[18]

Mead identifies the perception stage as

> a relation between a highly developed physiological organism and an object, or an environment in which selection emphasizes certain elements. This relation involves a duration and a process. The process is that of action through media which affect the sense organs of the biological individual. The process takes time, and the effect produced upon the organism is later than the disturbance of the medium and still later than the influence of the object upon the medium. The customary interpretation of this statement identifies the perception

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[16]See George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Act (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 3-25.

[17]Paul E. Pfuetze, Self, Society, and Existence (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 44. Pfuetze is being included because he is, in this work, interpreting Mead's writing. The general tone of this book does indicate, further, that he is working from the perspective of the symbolic interactionists.

[18]Maurice Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1956), p. 21.

> with the effect within the organism, regarding these bodily effects as significant of the things that have mediately affected them, justifying this significance by the fact that any object or event such as an organism is significant of the rest of nature and therefore of the particular objects which are involved in the process of perception; the selection of this particular object being due to the sensitiveness of the organism to the relation, one relatum of which is found in the nervous excitement within the organism /impulse/.[19]

Basically, Mead is arguing that the impulse has mediated those parts of reality which the organism will attend to. When the organism finds an element in the environment which releases or satisfies the search of the impulse, he will attend to that element. This attending is what Mead terms perception, which by his analysis is selective in nature.[20]

The perceptual object, though, "is primarily the organization of the immediate environment with reference to the organism." And, perception, so conceived, "has no other significance than that of the sense apparatus in its adjustment to the environment, in its function in selection of the stimulation needed for the reaction of the organism through its relation to the central nervous system . . ."[21] In the stage of perception, the object is yet in the distance. Thus, we come to the stage of manipulation in which the organism makes "direct" contact with the object and plots out his course of action in relation to it. It is in this stage that the organism "handles" the object, either physically or

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[19]Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, pp. 8-9.

[20]The reader is referred to a discussion of the manner in which this selective perception occurs, as detailed by psychologist Fritz Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 22-5.

[21]Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, p. 16.

symbolically, and prepares for the stage of consummation.[22]

Pfuetze, in his brilliant interpretation of Mead, has meshed the stages of manipulation and consummation into a single stage that he calls "response." For him, the response is "the reply to the stimulus terminating the chain of reactions set in motion by the impulsive act of the form in selecting its stimulus /its act of perceiving a segment of the environment/."[23] Consummation, then, is the actual "reaction" to the environment, the thing which common-sense language calls an act, for it is the only part or stage of the act which is directly observable in day to day human interaction.

Charles Morris does us the favor of pulling the act back together with a crystallizing example:

> The hungry animal has an impulse to eat; this impulse in turn determines what stands out as a distant stimulus to guide the ongoing action; the object that is approached is clawed, bitten, downed; with eating the impulse reaches its consummation. And similar examples could be chosen at the level of complex social organisms.[24]

And, it is important that we do pull the concept of the act back together, for the advice of Andrew Reck is sound:

> The discrimination of these stages must not obscure the concrete wholeness of the act, for the act, as the "unit of existence," is not a thin moment but rather "stretches beyond the stimulus to the response."[25]

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[22]See Ibid., pp. 17-23.

[23]Pfuetze, Self, Society, and Existence, p. 45.

[24]Charles Morris, "Introduction," in George Herbert Mead's The Philosophy of the Act (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), ix. Morris is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

[25]Andrew Reck, "Introduction," in his Selected Writings: George Herbert Mead (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), xx. Quotations are from Mead, Philosophy of the Act. Reck is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

But there are potential problems in this brief description of the act. On its face, this explanation allows one to draw the inadequate conclusion that (1) the act may be equally well performed by nonhuman organisms and (2) the act is necessarily short in duration. Each of these inadequate conclusions will now be dispelled in turn.

The example which Morris gives for the act has, as its central character, a nonhuman form--the hungry animal. And, this hungry animal performs, in turn, each of the stages of the act described by Mead. I am maintaining that this conclusion is inadequate, not false. It is probably true that animals can perform an act, but their range of acting is extremely limited and it is based upon non-symbolic processes. It is clear from Mead's writings that he was primarily concerned with the human symbolic act, man interacting with other men or with his environment--what we shall refer to in later pages as the "social act." The basic reason that the act must be regarded as a typically human "action" is found in the concept of mediation. During the manipulatory stage the object is handled, toyed with. Particularly if the manipulation is symbolic, this handling is accomplished through thought. Meltzer explains the importance of this mediation process as he argues that the act

> is viewed as a complete span of action: its initial point is an impulse and its terminal point some objective which gives release to the impulse. In between, the individual is in the process of constructing, organizing his behavior. It is during this period that the act undergoes its most significant phase of development. In the case of human behavior, this period is marked by the play of images of possible goals or lines of action upon the impulse, thus directing the activity to its consummation.[26]

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[26]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," pp. 17-18. Italics are mine.

This mediation, again, is accomplished through thought. Mead maintains that, indeed, it is this aspect of the act which brings about human thought: "Reflective thinking arises in testing the means which are presented for carrying out some hypothetical way of continuing action which has been checked."[27]

The second inadequate conclusion which could follow from our description of the act concerned its time-span. Briefly, an act may be extremely short, as in calling out the name of a person you want to find, or it may be extremely long, as with conducting an exhaustive search for a missing person. Each of these is considered an act by the symbolic interactionists. As Mead has maintained, the act is the "unit of existence."[28] And conceived this way, any action which constitutes a unit can be considered as an act, whether it lasts a second or a year. We should observe, however, that in longer acts we are likely to be talking about a number of shorter acts which interlock so as to serve as larger units. We can illustrate this notion by arguing that one speech by a civil rights leader may be considered an act; likewise a series of speeches given by the same leader may be considered as a series of separate acts, and may be so studied; but, in addition, this series of speeches, if intended as the parts of a unified campaign (a unit) may also be considered as one larger act, and may be studied in this way also.

THE SOCIAL ACT

To this point the discussion has centered on what I shall term the basic or individual act. Such an act does have direct social goals and

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[27]Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, p. 79.

[28]Ibid., p. 65.

implications but it is not the same as what the symbolic interactionists call the "social act." The social act is of such central importance to the symbolic interactionists that Miyamoto has called it "the keystone of the interactionist approach."[29]

For human action to be termed "social," or for it to have social impact, it need not occur in a situation involving two or more people. As Meltzer explains, we may call behavior social either when it is a response to others or "when it has incorporated in it the behavior of others. The human being responds to himself as others respond to him, and in so doing he imaginatively shares the conduct of others."[30] However, an individual's action, replete with social implications, is not what the interactionists have in mind with the term "social act."

The social act is defined, in the words of Mead, as

> one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is. I wish, however, to restrict the social act to the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual, and whose object as defined by the act . . . is a social object. I mean by a social object one that answers to all the parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. The objective of the acts is then found in the life processes of the group, not in those of the separate individuals alone.[31]

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[29]S. Frank Miyamoto, "The Social Act: A Re-examination of a Concept," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, eds. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 293. Miyamoto is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

[30]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," p. 9.

[31]This statement is taken from a footnote in Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead, p. 18.

The distinction that we make, then, between an act with social implications and a social act is clarified by Miyamoto.

> The term "social act" has been used with two different meanings. Loosely employed, it refers to any act occuring in a social context; that is, any act having a social object as a referent. In Mead's usage, however, it refers to a group action; specifically, to an organized action of two or more individuals that is directed toward some common goal.[32]

Mead himself helps to further crystallize the relation between the two types of acts by suggesting that

> The perspective of the individual is, therefore, that of the social act--an act which is inclusive of the act of the individual but extends beyond it. The individual in assuming the attitude of the others assumes attitudes that are adjusted to his own particular response. In so far as these different attitudes of the others call for an identical response of his own, the organization of the social act is reflected into his act.[33]

Mead is arguing here that the individual, or basic, act has a social act as a point of reference and that the social act is the intermeshing of the acts of two or more individuals, aimed at a joint goal.

These two types of act, then, are a bit confusing. The individual act is social in its nature and aims--but it is not termed "social." The other, also social in its nature and aims, is called the "social act" because it actually involves the cooperative social behavior of two or more individuals. In an effort to provide a more clear distinction between the two, Blumer has chosen to call Mead's social act "joint action."[34]

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[32]Miyamoto, "The Social Act," p. 294.

[33]Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, pp. 152-3.

[34]See Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," American Journal of Sociology, LXXI (1966), pp. 535-44.

Perhaps this term does help to distinguish which of the two forms of act we are discussing at any given time.

At base, though, we are now turning our attention to the social act as Mead has defined it. It is much like the individual act in its basic features, but we should probe more deeply to discover how far the similarities go and what the differences between the two might be. Miyamoto lists four features of the social act:

> First, the concept refers to an abstraction from a continuous social process. Most social acts are intricately interwoven with many other acts and it is only by abstraction that a given instance may be singled out for observation. Second, a social act is conceived as having a beginning and ending even though it is difficult to define these boundaries in specific cases. Third, social acts may be subsumed within larger social acts.
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> Fourth and most important is the assumption that the social act is goal-directed or functional for the group and that individual acts will tend to be coordinated toward the fulfillment of that function.[35]

Max Weber re-emphasizes this fourth feature, noting that social action "takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course."[36]

A fifth feature of the social act is its situational grounding. The symbolic interactionist does not place primary emphasis upon social structures. Instead, he regards human acts as responses to environment, considering the peculiarities of each instance of action. Here we turn to Blumer and claim, with slightly different emphasis, that men act in response to specific social situations.

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[35]Miyamoto, "The Social Act," p. 294.

[36]Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1947), p. 88.

> People--that is, acting units--do not act toward culture, social structure, or the like; they act toward situations. Social organization enters into action only to the extent to which it shapes situations in which people act, and to the extent to which it supplies fixed sets of symbols which people use in interpreting their situations.[37]

The act is ultimately in the control of the person who initiates it. He selects his goals, he exercises selective perception in sorting out the stimuli to which he will react, he selects the particular means that he will undertake to achieve his goals. Man always retains the element of choice in his actions, so long as they are acts that are internally mediated (as opposed to habitual action[38]). Choice is prominent, Blumer indicates, throughout the "joint", or social, act.

> . . . the career of joint actions also must be seen as open to many possibilities of uncertainty. Let me specify the more important of these possibilities. One, joint actions have to be initiated--and they may not be. Two, once started a joint action may be interrupted, abandoned, or transformed. Three, the participants may not make a common definition of the joint action into which they are thrown and hence may orient their acts on different premises. Four, a common definition of a joint action may still allow wide differences in the direction of the separate lines of action and hence in the course taken by the joint action; a war is a good example. Five, new situations may arise calling for hitherto unexisting types of joint action, leading to confused exploratory efforts to work out a fitting together of acts. And six, even in the context of a commonly defined joint action,

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[37]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 146.

[38]Though it is probably accurate to say that habitual acts are not mediated, they may still be called "acts" in the symbolic interactionist sense. Habitual acts may be so considered since they were once mediated--indeed, they were probably mediated many times on their way to becoming habitual. This analysis, it would seem, must hold as valid unless one buys a wide range of human "instincts" as motivating certain human actions.

> participants may be led to rely on other considerations in interpreting and defining each other's lines of action.[39]

Thus we are impressed by the importance of choice in social acts. In all of these ways, and probably many more, the participants in such action must make critical choices, choices which may well mean success or failure for any given act.

But Blumer is making yet another point in this statement, namely that one of the unique characteristics of a social act (or, in his terms, joint action) is the complexity involved in these choices due to the presence of more than one individual in the action. When we consider the numerous choices involved in an "individual act" of only one person we must be impressed by the decisions that must be made in order for this relatively simple act to succeed in achieving the individual's goal. But in a social act it is assumed that two or more persons are cooperatively engaged in an act designed to reach a certain goal. Not only do we confront the problem of each individual charting a successful course to the goal, but also the problem of the proper meshing of the acts of the two individuals so that they will operate as an effective joint act. We might be reminded that too many cooks may spoil the broth.

Further confounding the role of choice in the social act is Levy's claim that the act, once started, tends "to go on to completion . . . As the act goes on, the energy directed toward completion increases. It is comparatively easy to prevent an act at the time when the impulse to act arises, more difficult to stop an act after it has begun, and most

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[39]Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," p. 541.

difficult to stop it when the end-point, the goal, is near."[40] In other words, certain options become more and more difficult to choose as an act progresses. Indeed, not only does it become difficult to stop an act, Levy maintains that it also becomes more difficult to radically shift the direction of an act. At times such a shift becomes nearly impossible. Not all acts, but

> certain kinds of goal-directed behavior, once set into operation, pursue their course, impelled by a law of their own, independent of attitudes, regardless of needs or wants. The individual is then literally caught up in the act, bound by it, compelled to go on and on until the act completes itself.[41]

This statement perhaps overdraws the interactionists' position, in that it seems to imply that there are times when choice is removed totally from the individuals involved in an act. A more representative statement would indicate that certain kinds of goal-directed behavior seem to pursue their own course, compelling the act to complete itself. For the interactionist, the only time that Levy's statement could be accepted at face value would be the instance of an act which the individual does not maintain conscious contact with. If the individual retains conscious contact with an act and it begins to produce results not desired or not anticipated in mediation, he could at least attempt to arrest the act and redirect it.

The social act, in sum, is much like the individual act except that it involves two or more persons cooperatively acting to achieve a common goal. We have traced through both the similarities of the social

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[40] Levy, "The Act as a Unit," p. 297.

[41] Ibid.

act and the individual act and the differences between the two. The most important distinction that can be drawn, in terms of the impact of the two types of act, concerns the complication of choices in the social act.

THE THOUGHT ACT: A THIRD TYPE OF ACT

The literature of the symbolic interactionists is rich with material concerning the human thought processes. And, as we noticed above, thought is the central process involved in the internal mediation that characterizes human acts. The symbolic interactionists, however, have never considered thought as an act in itself. It has always remained an element of either the individual act or the social act. In the following pages, I will argue that it can be productive to think in terms of a third type of act, a "thought act."

Natanson offers the germ for this analysis in his review of Mead's thought: "In its human form, though, the act is characterized by a perceptual state that contains within it the whole of the potentially completed act."[42] Before any self determined act is undertaken, Thomas argues, "there is always a stage of examination and deliberation which we may call the definition of the situation."[43] It is this time of examination and deliberation that we may term the thought act.

If the mediation process is truly an act in itself, then we should

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[42]Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead, p. 20.

[43]William I. Thomas, "The Definition of the Situation," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 315. Thomas is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

be able to identify the four stages of the act in it. If we assume that man, as the basic act suggests, does wish to maintain control over his actions then we have found the impulse stage of the thought act. The impulse is an antenna, and in the thought act it seeks release so that the overt act may be carefully considered before it is undertaken. Perception was defined as simply attending to a particular aspect of the environment which the impulse has sought out. Again, if we assume that the act itself takes place we may conclude that perception is present in the thought act, for as the impulse seeks to have the overt act carefully considered it will cause perception of the beginnings of an overt act. The stage of manipulation is clearly present in the thought act, since it is in this stage that the actual handling and testing of the alternatives takes place. Finally, consummation in the thought act would simply involve "giving the o.k." to a particular course of action. Thus, to the outside observer the thought act has no directly identifiable consummation stage: the consummation stage is there, but it never appears overtly except to the individual involved in the thought act.

Although I have maintained that the symbolic interactionists have not clearly treated thought as an act in itself, there are strong implications that it is an act. Meltzer, for example, implies this in speaking of the difference between animal and human reactions to blocked acts. "When the act of an animal is checked," he says, "it may engage in overt trial and error or random activity. In the case of blocked human acts, the trial and error may be carried on covertly, implicitly. Consequences can be imaginatively 'tried out' in advance."[44] And Desmonde also makes

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[44]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," p. 14.

this implication: "As a result of the internalization of the social act, the 'inner forum' comes into being. The organism rehearses internally various types of possible social relations."[45]

One final point needs to be made here: the thought act, even though we consider it an act per se, can exist only in relation to either an individual act or a social act. Its role is to service one of these other act forms. Just as action is undertaken only in response to a problematic situation, so is thought a problem-solving activity. Let us take the case of thought which is not followed by an observable act (or, at least, a positive observable act). In this case the thought act has probably produced a conclusion that no "action" need be taken on the matter under consideration. But the thinking itself was stimulated by a situation in which there was originally a question as to whether some sort of overt action would be appropriate.

Now, why is it important that we consider thought as an act in itself? Basically, I shall argue, thought plays such a central role in the symbolic interactionists' analysis of human action that it should be called an act for emphasis. As Rose claims, "Thinking is the process by which possible symbolic solutions and other future courses of action are examined, assessed for their relative advantages and disadvantages in terms of the values of the individual, and one of them chosen for action."[46]

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[45]William H. Desmonde, "The Position of George Herbert Mead," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, eds. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 60.

[46]Rose, "A Systematic Summary," p. 12.

The odds are good that if a particular act fails to achieve its goal, the mediation that preceded the act was faulty (either in choosing too difficult a goal or in charting a weak strategy). By elevating thought to the level of an act we place enough "symbolic" importance on it to cause the individual to examine more closely the ways that he thinks through problems, thus increasing the likelihood that he will be better able to mediate other future actions. Second, by identifying stages in the thought act we make it possible for the individual to "break down" his thought process to more closely examine its varying stages. This should allow the person to give closer analysis to the various stages and to pinpoint particular weaknesses.

THE ACT AS FORM

Hugh Duncan argues that in communication such things as where something is said, by whom, how, when, and for what purpose ultimately determine meaning for the symbolic act.[47] These elements make up the form of a given communicative act. People respond to acts of various sorts not only in terms of the "idea" presented in the act, but also in terms of the way in which the idea is presented. Furtner, form has a shaping influence on the way in which the agent conceives and develops the act: " . . . how we communicate determines what we communicate . . ."[48]

I have argued in this chapter that the symbolic interactionists reject the pigeon holing practices of many sociologists. They favor, rather, the examination of social acts in terms of the peculiarities of

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[47]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 146.

[48]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 32.

each situation. This viewpoint places prime value on the notion of process, but it does not rule out form as an important part of human interaction. The interactionists argue that the past actions in which we have been involved have provided certain patterns which serve as points of reference for us in current actions. Duncan fairly well represents this position in his analysis of symbolic action: "Every act contains a past, present, and a future, but the temporal structure and function of symbolic actions is determined by our need to act in a present. We turn to the past, as well as to the future, to create forms in which we can act."[49] Forms, then, are internally created by each actor through a reconstruction of his past relevant experiences. This differs from the overriding concept of form which the symbolic interactionists reject in that the other concept of form is imposed upon situations with relatively little regard for the individual actor. The other approach, in other words, places primary emphasis upon forms that are superimposed on situations by an outside observer. The interactionists' approach, on the other hand, places primary emphasis upon process and talks of forms only as a specific means for each individual to implement a particular action.

Through his experience in social action, man has come to place certain "formal" expectations on individual actions in certain types of situations. According to Fogarty, we have each developed "certain innate and internal patterns of expectancy . . ."[50] Thus, many in society reacted angrily to groups who, in the early 1960's, began to place their

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[49]Ibid., p. 48.

[50]Daniel Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 78.

public appeals in "strange" forms of protest. The patterns of experience for much of society had no point of reference for such forms of communication and the adjustment to this form of appeal was difficult. Then, after the nonviolent protests of the civil rights movement began to be accepted as a legitimate form of appeal by many in society, more violent forms of protest began to emerge. Again, the public was not prepared for the newer form. Some even asked why the nonviolent form (which they had not accepted only a few years earlier) could not be used. Along much the same lines, when some groups began "demanding" certain things from society many reacted against the form of the demand. In the experience of most of these people the request was a legitimate form, while the demand was not. Often the ideas that are presented in new forms are ignored by those who are not used to the form; they react, instead, to the form itself.

Form, then, carries important implications for the act. Basically, not only must an individual decide what "kind of" a reaction to give to some "stimulus" in the social environment. He must also decide what form he will use to express his reaction. The five elements in Burke's pentad (what we may term the elements of dramatistic action) combine to suggest both content and form in a given action. Scene provides the impetus to action--it sets the act in motion. Through an assessment of the agents who are part of the scene, the actor can determine both what types of ideas he needs to represent with his action and what forms the audience will understand as appropriate. Further, the actor as an agent must determine the forms of action which best suit his capabilities in a given situation. Agency--which may be considered another word for form--includes the full range of forms that the agent has at his disposal.

And, all of these elements tie together in a final act designed to achieve some purpose. In short, an act can take many forms. Burke's pentad suggests the elements that an individual must consider in choosing the form any particular act will take.

Finally, the notion of form is extremely important to social (or joint) acts. The social act, to be effective, requires that the individuals who are sharing the act somehow manage to "get together" in their presentation of it. It is necessary that their individual actions mesh in a progress toward their shared goal. Not only, then, do the individual actors need to "get their ideas together;" they also must get the forms in which the ideas are presented "together." Duncan underlines the importance of form to social acts: "Social forms . . . determine the satisfaction of the needs. Needs are always satisfied in relationships; relationships, in turn, are possible only because we understand what people mean by the forms in which they play their roles."[51]

CONCLUSION

The act is one of the most critical elements of the symbolic interactionist's approach to human behavior. It is the minded, purposive nature of the act which provides a clear distinction between the actions of man and the motions of other beings that may, on their face, resemble actions. We have identified three types of acts. The most basic act is the individual act, undertaken by a single person but with social goals or aims in mind. We can call this individual's action social in nature because he is part of society and any action he takes can potentially

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[51]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 49.

have an influence upon others in society. Further, this individual act may be addressed to other individuals, but insofar as there is only one person primarily involved in the act it is not regarded as social or joint action. The social act, on the other hand, involves two or more persons cooperatively acting to achieve a common goal. In its basic form it closely resembles the individual act, in that it is little more than the individual acts of two persons meshed together in a joint effort to reach a common goal. But in the meshing of the acts of two or more persons, the problems involved in controlling the action increase tremendously. Finally, we have identified the thought act by arguing that the process of thought does involve all of the stages of the basic act. By raising thought to the level of act we have given it added emphasis and have pointed to its signal importance in all human action.

Chapter 5

PURPOSE: THE "WHY" OF HUMAN INTERACTION

My purpose in this chapter is to discuss purpose, that element of the pentad which for Burke provides the "why" of human behavior. It is in terms of purpose that the concept of motive (or motivation) will be developed, as the symbolic interactionists view it. There is little doubt that motive is central to the ideas of the symbolic interactionists. But it is only recently that they have taken up the task of developing a theory of motives. For that reason, the view of motives and of purpose which will be unfolded in this chapter must be either sketchy or unclear, depending upon the perspective of the reader.

It is my contention, though, that although these theorists have not long worked directly at the task of understanding motives, they have long had a groundwork from which a theory of motives can grow. Therefore, after we have begun to understand their approach to motives, attention shall be turned to the background leading up to this understanding of motivation: role-taking and the self. These two concepts provide the basis for motivated behavior. And, these two, along with motive, make up the basis for an understanding of purpose. The motive itself is a reason for doing something. Role-taking and the operations of the self aid man in his choice of reasons for undertaking a given act. But, through role-taking and the operations of the self man also decides upon his goals--goals which he has "reason" or "motive" to achieve. Put

another way, both motive and purpose arise in the thought that precedes an overt act; they are identified in the internal drama of role-taking and the interaction of the "I" and "me" of the self.

MOTIVE: THE ANATOMY OF PURPOSE

Any discussion of motive necessarily places emphasis upon the "I." It is in the "I" that man's impulses to action reside and it is here that the final steps leading to action are taken. Thus it is in the "I" that we find the final determination of motive--the application of a motive in terms of motivated behavior.

The previous chapter was concerned primarily with action. As motive is so closely tied to action (for one concept to be present, the other is required also), it is well to begin our treatment of motive with an additional comment about action. Max Weber describes four types of action, each delineated according to its orientation. These types of action are taken

> (1) in terms of rational orientation to a system of discrete individual ends . . . that is, through expectations as to the behaviour of objects in the external situation and of other human individuals, making use of these expectations as "conditions" or "means" for the successful attainment of the actor's own rationally chosen ends; (2) in terms of rational orientation to an absolute value . . . involving a conscious belief in the absolute value of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behaviour, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospects of external success; (3) in terms of affectual orientation, especially emotional, determined by the specific affects and states of feeling of the actor; (4) traditionally oriented, through the habituation of long practice.[1]

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[1]Max Weber, "Types of Rationality," Theories of Society, Vol. II, ed. Talcott Parsons et al (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1961), pp. 1963-64. Weber is one of a group of theorists whose ideas come quite close to those of the symbolic interactionists. Many of the symbolic interactionists seem to refer to Weber's work and, by implication, seem inclined to include him within their school.

Among the things that can be identified as a common bond among these four types of action is the concept of motive. In each case the action is undertaken not only "for a purpose," or to reach a goal, they are also undertaken for a reason which lies behind the goal itself. All four types of action feature, in brief, motivated behavior. In fact, it might not be unreasonable to claim that most human action is motivated. It is important, then, to take a close look at motivation for it must certainly play a critical role in any theory of human action.

"The sociological approach to motivation," say Stone and Farberman, "begins with an innocuous-looking proposition: Man is active naturally."[2] Dewey agrees: "It is absurd to ask what induces a man to activity generally speaking. He is an active being and that is all there is to be said on that score."[3] What is pertinent is the matter of why people act in one way rather than another; or, how we may go about getting people to act in one way instead of the other. This view of man, argue Stone and Farberman,

> . . . relegates to the scrap heap of elegant tautology and/or compelling mystery all attempts to explain action by inside urges and outside attractions--pushes and pulls are pre-empted.[4]

As White notes more succinctly, "there is evidence of deepening discontent with theories of motivation based upon drives." Again, "Something important is left out when we make drives the operating forces in animal and

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[2]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Motives and Motivation," in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 467.

[3]John Dewey, "On Motive," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, eds. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 471.

[4]Stone and Farberman, "Motives and Motivation," p. 467.

human behavior."[5]

If the symbolic interactionists reject drives and related terms as the basis for a complete theory of motivation, where does their theory of motive start? Stacey and DeMartino give us that starting point:

> First, motivation is concerned with the "why" rather than with the "how" of human behavior. . . . Second, it is always the total organism in a social environment that responds or reacts, not just one segment of it. Third, motives can only be inferred from behavior; they are not directly observable. . . . Fourth, the "why" of a specific act may be due primarily to physiological factors, or to social factors, or more often to the interaction of the two.[6]

Physiological factors and intense psychological leanings, then, can operate as motives, but so can the social conditions in the environment. Indeed, because the act begins with the impulse stage and because the impulse can be released only if the "antenna" pick up a signal in the environment, we can trace the concept of motive back to the situation in which the individual finds himself. Burke has traced this course and his conclusion basically equates motive with situation:

> . . . man's words for motives are merely shorthand descriptions of situations. One tends to think of a duality here, to assume some kind of breach between a situation and a response. Yet the two are identical. When we wish to influence a man's response, for instance, we emphasize factors which he had understressed or

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[5]Robert White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," Understanding Human Motivation, eds. Chalmers L. Stacey and Manfred F. DeMartino (Cleveland: Howard Allen, Inc., 1963), p. 43. White's work is used here because of his rejection of drives as the basis of human action, a view shared by the symbolic interactionists.

[6]Chalmers L. Stacey and Manfred F. DeMartino, "Current Status," in their Understanding Human Motivation (Cleveland: Howard Allen, Inc., 1963), pp. 1-2. These writers have been included in this chapter because their basic notions concerning motivation mesh quite well with the basic assumptions of several of the symbolic interactionists.

> neglected, and minimize factors which he had laid great upon. This amounts to nothing other than an attempt to redefine the situation itself.[7]

To support this view that "motives and situations are one," Burke offers an example: an alarm clock as motive. A man's need to arise at a certain time is a situation. The alarm clock is the motive of his rising. Its ring is nothing more nor less than a shorthand term for "the situation which we have just described."[8] It must be remembered, though, that the "situation" is not "objective reality," but rather is subjectively defined by the actor.

Thus, at base, the symbolic interactionist grounds motive in situation--situation of any kind insofar as it influences human action. Further, as the symbolic interactionist searches out motives in given actions he is guided to find the "why" of that action.

This, then, is the basis upon which the symbolic interactionists have begun exploring the concept of motive. In the brief time that their attention has been directed to motive, a variety of definitions for the concept have been put forth. Though the definitions are by no means uniform, they are instructive in suggesting the other factors which these thinkers believe belong with motive. To begin with, Newcomb, Turner, and Converse use motive

> to refer to a state of the organism in which bodily energy is mobilized and directed in a selective fashion toward states of affairs, often though

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[7]Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 220.

[8]Ibid., p. 221.

> not necessarily in the external environment, called goals.[9]

They also draw a distinction between motive and motivated behavior, calling the latter "all the various forms of behavior in which a person engages as he strives to reach a goal."[10] These authors, then, place an emphasis upon the relation between purpose (goal) and motive.

Dewey places more emphasis upon the time relationship between the motive and the act: "A motive does not exist prior to an act and produce it. It is an act plus a judgment upon some element of it, the judgment being made in the light of the consequences of the act."[11] With this as a basis, he further defines motive as

> that element in the total complex of a man's activity which, if it can be sufficiently stimulated, will result in an act having specified consequences. And part of the process of intensifying (or reducing) certain elements in the total activity and thus regulating actual consequence is to impute these elements to a person as his actuating motives.[12]

Dewey, then, stresses the mediated nature of motive; he argues that motives are carefully chosen on the basis of anticipated consequences.

Foote adds the importance of the situation out of which an act arises, the basic point behind the thinking of most of these men:

> In a sentence, we take motivation to refer to the degree to which a human being, as a participant in the ongoing social process in which he necessarily finds himself, defines a problematic situation as

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[9]Theodore M. Newcomb, Ralph H. Turner, and Philip E. Converse, Social Psychology: The Study of Human Interaction (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 22. This book is clearly an approach to social psychology through the symbolic interaction lens.

[10]Ibid., p. 21.

[11]Dewey, "On Motive," p. 471.

[12]Ibid.

> calling for performance of a particular act, with more or less anticipated consummations and consequences, and thereby his organism releases the energy appropriate to performing it.[13]

Finally, Meltzer defines motivation as simply "a process of defining (symbolically, of course) the goal of an act."[14]

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that the symbolic interactionists have not outdone themselves in working toward an understanding of motive. I believe that this variety of definitions will support that contention. The concept of goal runs throughout the definitions, but it is perhaps the only common thread among all of them. Only recently have these students of society begun to work in earnest on a definition and relatively full outlining of the concept of motive. Their efforts seem to not yet be in concert. But it is possible to conclude, with the various offerings we have before us, that motive is goal oriented, and that it is at least grounded in the situation which provides the background for action.

But we still do not have anything approaching an understanding of what motive really means to the symbolic interactionists. These definitions stress certain concepts, but their lack of consensus still leaves us feeling not unlike the man in a haunted house whose flashlight just burned out. There are several additional features of the concept of motive which can be mentioned and these should bring us closer to a feeling for the general viewpoint that the symbolic interactionists are

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[13]Nelson Foote, "Identification as the Basis for a Theory of Motivation," American Sociological Review, XVI (1951), p. 15.

[14]Bernard N. Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 18.

working toward.

First, motive guides the achievement of purpose. Foote speculates that "motivated behavior is distinguished by its prospective reference to ends in view, by being more or less subject to conscious control through choice among alternative ends and means."[15] Motive is, then, based in part upon the end an individual chooses in a given action and the means he chooses to achieve it ("means" may also be identified as an action--a smaller unit of action contributing toward the achievement of the larger end.) For Weber such choices of ends and means enter into motives when they are thought through:

> Action is rationally oriented to a system of discrete individual ends . . . when the end, the means, and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighed. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to other prospective results of employment of any given means, and finally of the relative importance of different possible ends.[16]

Further, we may not say that these "individual ends" operate as motives until the individual freely determines them as initiators of action. Burke draws a critical distinction here between coincidental (or "statistical") chartings of motives that appear, to an outsider, to be actual motives because of the number of times the observer may notice them in conjunction with a given type of action and "chosen" ends and means. Only the chosen ends and means can be truly considered motives, for until a person "is specifically indoctrinated with such a concept, it does not figure as a motive in his acts, so far as he personally is

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[15]Foote, "Identification," p. 15.

[16]Weber, "Types of Rationality," p. 1064.

concerned."[17] What all this means in terms of the core element of motive is clarified by Stone and Farberman: " . . . motivation is a question of direction, not origination of action."[18]

Next, the symbolic interactionists view motives as social instruments. This view comes out of a combination of two factors: motives are springs to action and action is social in nature. C. Wright Mills explains this position:

> Max Weber defines motive as a complex of meaning, which appears to the actor himself or to the observer to be an adequate ground for his conduct. The aspect of motive which this conception grasps is its intrinsically social character.[19]

And since motives are social in nature there is often the desire for an actor to declare to the society around him what his motivation for taking a particular action was. In so doing he makes an appeal to the community, above and beyond the appeal of his larger action alone, to accept his action for one reason or another. According to Burke,

> Any explanation is an attempt at socialization, and socialization is a strategy; hence, in science as in introspection, the assigning of motives is a matter of appeal--and the distinction between a Pharisaic account of one's motives and a scientific motivation of one's argument may involve merely a difference in the scope of the orientation witnin which the tactics of appeal are framed.[20]

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[17]Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 219.

[18]Stone and Farberman, "Motives and Motivation," p. 467.

[19]C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 358.

[20]Burke, Permanence and Change, pp. 24-5.

Accordingly, the public explanation of a person's motives may differ to an extent from those things which a person consciously recognized as motives at the time the action was undertaken. Indications of this have come out of the work of Jean Paiget. In an attempt to make an action palatable to the public a person maneuvers to find "motives" which will satisfy others. He may spontaneously announce "many points and progressions of thought which had never even occurred to him until he sat down to the business of motivating his argument for his public." Many times the "reasons" he will announce publicly were totally skipped over in his thoughts before undertaking an action.[21] Peters makes much the same point in drawing a rather lengthy distinction between the motive which guided an action in reality and the motive which a person claims (for public purposes) guided it.[22]

A distinction has been drawn here which should perhaps be briefly spelled out. First we were to understand that motives constituted the "why" of an individual's behavior. Now, though, it becomes clear that motives also can refer to someone's explanation of the "why"--or, if you will, the "why" once removed. And in this way motives are used by man as more than a simple "motivator of action." They become, according to Mills, social instruments which are used to influence the person himself or other people.[23] Motives, when used in this second way, take

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[21] Ibid., p. 24.

[22] See R. S. Peters, The Concept of Motivation (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 1-9. Peters is not a symbolic interactionist, but his views on this particular matter are instructive in that they do closely parallel the thoughts of the symbolic interactionists.

[23] Mills, "Situated Actions," p. 358.

on a particularly rhetorical flavor. Burke backs into this idea by disdainfully noting the contradictory claims of the scientist:

> As for the logical arguments of science, they are based upon elaborate rationalizations which seem to go beyond mere self-deception and come close to downright hypocrisy. For note the purest diplomacy in the choice of motives which the scientific author offers as grounds for his beliefs, when he seeks to make his point of view as appealing to the reader as he can.[24]

We must also understand that both in the case of motive for action and motive for public explanation of action, a man is not "stuck" with the first motive he chose. Rather, motives may shift both in the middle of an act and in the middle of an act's explanation. Thus Mills argues that

> A man may begin an act for one motive. In the course of it, he may adopt an ancillary motive. This does not mean that the second apologetic motive is inefficacious. The vocalized expectation of an act, its "reason," is not only a mediating condition of the act but it is a proximate and controlling condition for which the term "cause" is not inappropriate. It may strengthen the act of the actor. It may win new allies for his act.[25]

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that the symbolic interactionists have not outdone themselves in working toward a definition of motive. The variety of definitions we considered a few pages back supports this position. However, we can now identify several trains of thought that do tie together the current state of symbolic interactionists' thinking about motives. First, motive is goal oriented. Beyond that, it is the "why" of human action, it is grounded in the situation which provides the background for action, it may change as an act progresses,

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[24]Burke, Permanence and Change, pp. 23-4.

[25]Mills, "Situated Actions," p. 358.

and all of these things may be considered either from the point of view of the motive as leading to action or the motive as used to publicly explain action.

SYMBOL AS MOTIVE: A UNIQUE POINT OF VIEW

All of the preceding views of the nature of motive are, in their totality, a bit unique. Other theorists may have hinted at the development of motives in terms of one or two of these components, but the degree to which the symbolic interactionists stress the particularly social nature of motive through a combination of all these features sets them a bit apart from the older psychological theories of motive. But their truly unique contribution to the theory of motive springs from their notion that language itself can be a primary source of motives. Because of the importance of language to their overall view of human action, they have developed the notion of symbol as motive.

The action of a non-symbolic animal is most often of a physical nature (hunger, thirst, etc.). On the other hand, man's symbols themselves can serve as motive to him. In no other way could pride, hate, love, and other such feelings (which have no equivalent in the world of physical reality) serve as the motives for human behavior that they so often do. These feelings which often act as motives, really, have no physical equivalents. Rose argues that "Man lives in a symbolic environment as well as a physical environment and can be 'stimulated' to act by symbols as well as by physical stimuli."[26] In an earlier chapter we

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[26]Arnold Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in his Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 5.

discovered that man interprets even the physical stimuli that impinge upon his senses through his language. Thus the contention of Burke that "motives are distinctly linguistic products"[27] makes a good deal of sense. In this way, symbol is motive, and motive is symbolic. A symbol functions as motive when the meaning it stirs causes one to seek the fulfillment of a goal. Further, as I have previously claimed that motive is shorthand for situation, I can now claim that motive is shorthand for symbolically mediated situation.

> . . . our introspective words for motives are rough, shorthand descriptions for certain typical patterns of discrepant and conflicting stimuli? If we say that we perform an act under the motivation of duty, for instance, we generally use the term to indicate a complex stimulus-situation wherein certain stimuli calling for one kind of response are linked with certain stimuli calling for another kind of response. We act out of duty as against love when we finally respond in the way which gives us less immediate satisfaction (we do not throw up our job and elope) though promising more of the eventual satisfactions that may come of retaining the goodwill of irate parent or censorious neighbors.[28]

In the words of Mills what this choice of action and motive amounts to is the "controlling speech form which was incipiently or overtly presented"[29] in a given act or preparation for it. Duncan provides further insight:

> The heart of Burke's argument is simple enough, namely that symbolic forms affect conduct because of the ways in which they affect communication, and thus all action. He is saying that motives lie not only in some kind of experience "beyond" symbols,

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[27]Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 35.

[28]Ibid., p. 30.

[29]Mills, "Situated Actions," p. 361.

> but also in symbols. In sum, symbolism is a motive because symbolism is a motivational dimension in its own right.[30]

So the central issue here is that man selects his motives in terms of his language and the only way that he can explain the motives, if called upon to do so, is through a linguistic device. If a man acts out of "duty," he acts out of a set of meanings that he has developed for the term "duty." If he acts in response to a specific environmental situation, he acts in response to that situation as he has linguistically mediated it. As Mills says, rather directly, "Motives are words."[31] Foote puts the matter a little differently. Names, he says, motivate human behavior. Through an analysis of language functions we can abandon predispositional theories of motive and yet maintain a theory which can be empirically tested.[32] Thus, the symbolic interactionists reject the predispositional "spring" theories which other theorists have posited. They insist, instead, that motives are linguistically mediated. Once this assumption is made, it is necessary to add the assumption that symbols--the mechanism of mediation--form the basis for motives.

But there is yet a second aspect to the concept of symbol as motive: symbol as situation. Situation as motive, when cast in terms of language as motivation,

> means the language act as a whole construed as a situation. In Burke's terms language-using is an act. The motive is the situation in general. Thus, words act upon us as the result of an agent who uses them, the scene out of which they grow, the purpose for which they are intended, and the strategies that are employed in manipulating them. Translating still further, a symbolic situation

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[30]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, "Introduction," in Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), xx-xxi.

[31]Mills, "Situated Actions," p. 356.

[32]Foote, "Identification," p. 18.

> represents a co-ordination or interrelationship of act, agent, agency, purpose, and scene.[33]

Once we accept the concept of situation as motive and concede that symbols may be motives, we must then agree that purely "symbolic situations" occur. These symbolic situations may be, for example, conversations in which only language-related matters are of primary importance, or they may be "physical happenings" which have real meaning only after a linguistic translation. But it is also clear that the symbolic interactionists not only accept the idea of symbol as situation, they base a vast number of other ideas around it.

The very act of defining man as a symbol-using animal requires that we take a view naming symbol as motive, for "if we regard man as a symbol-using animal we must stress symbolism as a motive in any discussion of social behavior."[34] As it is language that separates man from other animals, so does language-as-motive separate man's motivations from those of other animals:

> . . . these theorists and critics take an original view of human motivation. They contend that human motivation is distinct from that of other beings because the nature and structure of language are themselves motivating forces and because the interaction between man and his language profoundly transforms his physical, biological, and animal needs, drives, and desires. The motive forces within language arise from its nature as an instrument of transcendence, as in naming, man not only draws arbitrary boundaries about an event or object, but goes beyond it to speak of the event or object in terms of what it is not, a word, by which he codifies his experiences into meanings which reflect his and his group's perspectives and

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[33]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 90.

[34]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 114.

> attitudes. . . . Language urges man toward ever higher moments of symbolic transcendence, a motive mythically represented in the story of the tower of Babel.[35]

And in this way language operates as motive to man, removing him from the "drive" world of physiological needs and moving him to what Maslow has termed the "higher needs."[36] Deeply imbedded in the higher needs of, say, self-actualization are goals which can be defined only linguistically. These needs are so far removed from the physical bases of biological necessity that the motives which guide us toward them can be nothing more nor less than symbolic motives.

ROLE-TAKING: THE INTERNALIZATION OF THE OTHER

In the previous chapter the nature of the act was outlined in some detail. One of the primary arguments put forward there concerned the central importance of thought to all human action. Thought was seen as so central to action that an argument was made for identifying thought as an act in itself. But even in the individual act, it is in the manipulatory stage that the final choice of means and ends is made--a choice which is then "acted out" in the consummatory stage. And, this choice of ends and means is made as the individual looks to the future and projects the several available choices onto society as he imagines it. He

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[35]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 104.

[36]See Abraham H. Maslow, "A Dynamic Theory of Human Motivation," Understanding Human Motivation, eds. Chalmers L. Stacey and Manfred F. DeMartino (Cleveland: Howard Allen, Inc., 1963), p. 85. Maslow is not a symbolic interactionist. However, reference is here made to his hierarchy of "needs" to serve as an illustration. Though Maslow does not work from the symbolic interactionist perspective, this hierarchy, used for illustrative purposes only, does not seriously violate the symbolic interactionist perspective.

then weighs the results of these projections and picks the one course of action that he will take overtly. We may translate the desire to reach the chosen goal as a purpose; the reason for choosing that goal as a motive. Role-taking provides the means by which these choice-producing thought processes are carried out in the manipulatory stage of the act. This "imaginative completion of an act . . . necessarily takes place through role-taking," Meltzer argues. This is so because for a person to complete the act in his mind and then attempt to gauge the results it will bring, "the individual must put himself in the position of the other person, must identify with him."[37]

Here we have, in effect, a microscopic definition of role-taking. Sociologist Walter Coutu provides a more complete definition. He argues that role-taking is a

> phase of the symbolic process by which a person momentarily pretends to himself that he is another person, projects himself into the perceptual field of the other person, imaginatively "puts himself in the other's place," in order that he may get an insight into the other person's probable behavior in a given situation. The purpose of this is to enable him to get the other person's "point of view" so that he can anticipate the other's behavior and then act accordingly.[38]

Thus, an individual may be said to take the role of the other whenever he uses that role to interpret a situation and guide a response to it. The accuracy with which one performs role-taking is basically irrelevant to the social impact of role-taking itself, since once an individual has

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[37]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," p. 9.

[38]Walter Coutu, "Role-Playing vs. Role-Taking: An Appeal for Clarification," American Sociological Review, XVI (1951), pp. 180-81. Coutu, who can be classified as a symbolic interactionist, is here attempting to more clearly define one of the interactionists' more important concepts.

drawn his picture of the other's role, he acts on the basis of that picture "unaffected by the accuracy or inaccuracy of that conception."[39] Ralph Turner summarizes role-taking, then, as a "process of looking at or anticipating another's behavior by viewing it in the context of a role imputed to that other."[40]

Role-taking is a process which requires development in the individual--it is not an instinct which he was born with, nor does it come into bloom at the magic age of three years and 45 days. This development begins as the child begins to gain a command of language. Desmonde, in an explication of Mead's thinking, says it is through his ability "to use significant symbols /that/ a given organism can take two or more roles simultaneously."[41]

At the heart of this developmental process is the child's grasp of language. Role-taking capabilities improve as a child gains a greater command of language. It is only through the symbolic process, says Coutu, that man can "pretend momentarily that he is another person."[42] The young child, relatively unskilled in language, is unable to separate the role of the other from his own role. The two roles, in this early stage of development, become intertwined. The child will either totally forget

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[39]Ralph H. Turner, "Role-Taking, Role Standpoint, and Reference-Group Behavior," American Journal of Sociology, LXI (1956), p. 318. Turner is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

[40]Ibid., p. 316.

[41]William H. Desmonde, "The Position of George Herbert Mead," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, eds. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 59. Desmonde is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

[42]Coutu, "Role-Playing vs. Role-Taking," p. 181.

his own identity and act as he sees the other acting, or he will forget the other's identity and project the other's actions to mirror his own. In later stages the child becomes able to separate the other-role from his own--he becomes capable of taking the role of the other while still viewing the world from his own perspective. In addition, as time passes and the individual gains a greater command of language he becomes able to take the roles of several others simultaneously, keeping them separated, and speculating on the possible reaction to be drawn from each of them in response to a given act.[43] Finally the individual becomes gradually capable of discriminative or selective role-taking: ". . . one's orientation determines that only certain attitudes of the other-role will be especially relevant to the determination of his own behavior."[44] Selective role-taking is important because it involves an ability to discriminate among situations confronting the individual in different environments. In these different situations, of course, different sets of other-attitudes may need to be discovered.

After a person has achieved a relatively full development in the skills of role-taking, he will participate in the activity from one of three points of view outlined by Turner: adopting the other's standpoint as his own and allowing it to become an automatic determinant of his own behavior; viewing the other-role from the standpoint of a third party, gathering data for an "objective" decision; and ascertaining the other's role in terms of its effect on interaction between one's self and the other, studying the impact of the other on the achievement of some personal

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[43]Turner, "Role-Taking," p. 319.

[44]Ibid., p. 321.

or shared goal.

Each of these perspectives, in addition, carries with it different implications for human action. When the first viewpoint is taken, one simply acts as the other would act in the same situation. On the other hand, when the second standpoint is adopted the actor learns "what behavior is expected of the actor, depending upon the inferences made concerning the role of the other." This tells the actor how he ought to act toward the other. The third point of view is only slightly different. It indicates to the actor how he may expect the other to act in a given situation.[45] It is clear that individuals use all three standpoints constantly, switching from one to another as needed. Indeed, all three may be considered in any action a person undertakes: e.g., if I were him, what would I do in this situation; what would he expect me to do in this situation (or, which of my actions will he predict, given my assessment of his role); and if I choose "this" action, what may I expect by way of a counter action from him?

Thus, role-taking is an activity which consists of one person imaginatively projecting certain sets of attitudes, feelings, and the like from another person into his own mind. It is designed to give one person a "feel for" the way that another person thinks and acts. On the basis of his imputation of the role of an other, an actor chooses from among a variety of possibilities the specific course of action he shall follow in a given situation. Of course, just as one may take the role of the single other, he may also attempt to take the role of a "generalized

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[45]Materials in this and the preceding paragraph are based upon the ideas of Turner, "Role-Taking," pp. 319-21.

other," the community of persons around him.[46]

THE FUNCTIONS OF ROLE-TAKING

It is clear that role-taking is a necessary prerequisite for effective social action, and that--more specifically--it is a necessary prerequisite for the manipulatory stage of the act. But beyond this it is possible to identify more directly some of the specific functions that role-taking plays in assisting and, to an extent, directing human behavior.

Most basically, role-taking is the primary vehicle for human thought about projected actions--the choosing of purposes and the actions attendant to achieving them. Mead makes this clear as he maintains that when we have an argument we plan to present someone

> we think how we will present it to that individual. As soon as we present it, we know that he would reply in a certain way. Then we reply in a certain fasnion to him. Sometimes it is easier to carry out such a conversation by picking out a particular protagonist we know. In that way in the night hours we are apt to go through distressing conversations we have to carry out the next day. . . . That is the process of thought. It is taking the attitude of others, talking to other people, and then replying in their own language.[47]

Mead seems to be saying that role-taking, in addition to being a prerequisite for thought (or functioning so as to allow thought), is also a prototype of thought. Perhaps it is more "accurate" to claim that it is the mechanism which allows social thought, but more is involved in thought

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[46]Rose, "A Systematic Summary," pp. 8-9.

[47]George Herbert Mead, "The Problem of Society--How We Become Selves," George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology, ed. Anselm Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 33.

than role-taking. Social thinking, in short, would be impossible without it. And this process of social thought allows the individual to think through arguments and actions which he might later use in the consummatory stage of an act.

Second, role-taking functions to implement both the individual act and the "social act." This claim can be illustrated and supported in several ways. To begin with, role-taking helps to determine the purpose an individual will identify in a given action and it helps to guide him in choosing the best means to achieve that purpose. This is so, maintains Turner, because it allows him to project upon a situation the purpose which has the greatest chance of being achieved and to test in advance the best ways to attempt the gaining of the purpose.

> The Actor must examine the probable interaction between the self-role and the other-role in terms of the promotion of purpose. He lacks a specific or detailed directive supplied by the standpoint of a third party and consequently must shape his own role behavior according to what he judges to be the probable effect of interaction between his role and the inferred role of the other.[48]

Second, role-taking facilities the coordination of the actions of individuals involved in a social act. When an actor participates in a social act he must be able to identify what his role in the development of the joint goal should be. Turner argues that role-taking helps to implement the social act in this way because the self-other relationship can "be viewed as an aspect of the total social act,"[49] allowing the adjustments that each party needs to make so as to better mesh with

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[48]Turner, "Role-Taking," p. 320.

[49]Ibid., p. 317.

the other party. Only if one can predict what an other will do can the two hope to come close to meshing their actions in the manner required for effective social acts.

Third, role-taking functions in the implementation of the social act in that it allows the development of significant communication--a necessary prerequisite to social intercourse. According to Natanson, Mead's theory suggests that the understanding of a gesture is

> a double process which requires the "addressee" to take the place of the "addressor" of the gesture as well as the reverse situation. Thus, "significance from the standpoint of the observer may be said to be present in the gesture which calls out the appropriate response in the other or others within a co-operative act, but it does not become significant to the individuals who are involved in the act unless the tendency to the act is aroused within the individual who makes it, and unless the individual who is directly affected by the gesture puts himself in the attitude of the individual who makes the gesture."[50]

This argument is clarified by Cottrell:

> . . . in most current theory regarding human interaction there is the basic assumption that as the individual reacts in his various life situations he not only develops those responses appropriate to his own part in the relationships but also incorporates in his reactive system the responses of the others in the situation. Only as this takes place, we say, can the individual acquire a system of significant symbols by means of which true communication takes place.[51]

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[50]Maurice Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1956), p. 8. Quoting Mead.

[51]Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "Some Neglected Problems in Social Psychology," Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, eds. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 63. Cottrell is considered to be a symbolic interactionist.

Finally, and acting as sort of an overview, role-taking is a prerequisite to effective interaction itself, for it is only if one partner in a social act understands the role of the other partner(s) that true interaction can take place. As Desmonde says, it is through role-taking that "the unification of roles or perspectives occurs, and common viewpoints become possible."[52] For interaction to occur between an organism and an object, says Natanson, it is necessary that "the organism get 'inside' the interior of the object and 'take the attitude of acting as the physical thing will act.'"[53]

Dewey approaches this same point from a slightly different perspective, holding that

> There is no miracle in the fact that if a child learns any language he learns the language that those about him speak and teach, especially since his ability to speak that language is a pre-condition of his entering into effective connection with them, making wants known and getting them satisfied.[54]

The child, then, in learning interaction learns to take the role of the parent in terms of the parent's language and the parent's meanings.

Blumer "finalizes" this explanation of the close link between role-taking and interaction. He explains, as was noted in the previous chapter, that group action basically is a fitting together of individual lines of action. To do this with any degree of effectiveness,

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[52]Desmonde, "The Position of George Herbert Mead," p. 60.

[53]Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead, p. 31. Quoting Mead.

[54]John Dewey, "Communication, Individual and Society," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 142.

> each individual aligns his action to the action of others by ascertaining what they are doing or what they intend to do--that is, by getting the meaning of their acts. . . . He forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others. This is the fundamental way in which group action takes place in human society.[55]

A fourth function of role-taking is the provision of social control. Social values, according to Mead, provide a mechamism for social control:

> There is a common attitude, that is, one which all assume under certain habitual situations. Through the use of language . . . the individual does take the attitude of others, especially these common attitudes, so that he finds himself taking the same attitude toward himself that the community takes. This is what gives the principle of social control, not simply the social control that results from blind habit, but a social control that comes from the individual assuming the same attitude toward himself that the community assumes toward him.[56]

Thus, if a community's values identify a certain action as against the community's best interests, the individual senses this value and chooses not to take that particular action--to do so would place him in disfavor and would bring re-actions against him that would not be in his best interests.[57]

Fifth, and for present purposes last, role-taking is the basic process out of which the self and the self-concept develop. Certain types of role-taking are reflexive--the individual takes the role of the other in order to see how he, himself, appears to others. And when

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[55]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 142.

[56]Mead, "The Problem of Society," p. 35.

[57]It is when these values are in periods of change that massive social upheaval, conflict, and polarization occur--for there may be many different sets of values guiding the various groups in the community.

role-taking is reflexive, says Turner, "the individual is led not merely to consider the effects of his action or their compatibility with some standard or code but to picture himself specifically as an object of evaluation by someone else."[58] When this occurs, "the role of the other is employed as a mirror, reflecting the expectations or evaluations of the self as seen in the other role . . ."[59] By using the other-role as a mirror, Meltzer claims,

> the individual can come to see himself as an object. The standpoint of others provides a platform for getting outside oneself and thus viewing oneself. The development of the self is concurrent with the development of the ability to take roles.[60]

Thus, the final function of role-taking, as far as the present study is concerned, is the development of the self. To the symbolic interactionist, an individual's self (and his self-concept) is a product of his interaction with others and of his ability to see himself through the eyes of the other person.

THE SELF: "I" THE ACTOR AND "ME" THE INTERACTOR

The self, argue the symbolic interactionists, is a social product. Again, it develops through interaction with other persons as these other persons act as a mirror, letting the individual see himself as the community sees him. Mead defines the self as "an individual who affects himself as he affects another . . ."[61] He is one who gathers the same meanings from his speech as do others, who assumes the attitudes of the

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[58]Turner, "Role-Taking," p. 321.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," p. 10.

[61]Mead, "The Problem of Society," p. 40.

other with whom he is communicating. Thus, as Natanson argues, language is a prerequisite to the full development of the self:

> Significant gesture is a necessary condition for the development of the self, since Mead considers the self to be an emergent from social experience. Through language the individual gains the capacity to grasp his self as an object observed from the standpoint of another person.[62]

The self, then, is an extremely important concept for the symbolic interactionist. It means that not only can others exercise some degree of control over an individual (through the individual's role-taking behavior), but the individual himself can exercise control over his own actions (through the internalization of outside controls from the past).[63] And by having a self, the person can act toward himself just as he can act toward other persons: if you will, he can interact with himself. Blumer makes this aspect of the self a key one to his analysis of human behavior:

> He can act toward himself as he might act toward others. Each of us is familiar with actions of this sort in which the human being gets angry with himself, rebuffs himself, takes pride in himself, argues with himself, tries to bolster his own courage, tells himself that he should "do this" or not "do that," sets goals for himself, makes compromises with himself, and plans what he is going to do.[64]

This capacity for self interaction is the capacity which gives man the capability of minded action--as opposed to automatic response.

The symbolic interactionists posit two parts in the self: an "I" and a "me." Natanson draws a distinction between these two parts

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[62]Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead, p. 12.

[63]Cottrell, "Some Neglected Problems in Social Psychology," p. 66.

[64]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 140.

by arguing that "from the point of view of the community and its mores, the self is a 'me.' In its individual aspect, i.e., from the standpoint of the unique person, the self is an 'I.'"[65] Stone and Farberman help to clarify the meaning of these two parts as they talk of the emergence of the self in toto.

> This conception emerges as one takes over others' reactions toward himself in the form of a "me." The "me" is given full expression when one takes over the attitude of the "generalized other," the community, or a social world, and regulates his own conduct in terms of such organized expectations. . . . Because these attitudes have been incorporated, the "I" is engaged in constant conversation with the "me"--the internalized attitudes of others. One thinks, and thought is an internalized forum--an ongoing conversation between the "I" and the "me"--between experience and conceptualization.[66]

Thus the "me" is that part of the self which contains the attitudes of single others and of the generalized other with which a person comes in contact. It is the internalization of social values and it exercises social-self-control upon the individual's actions. The "I," on the other hand, is that part of the self which initiates an individual's actions. An "I" unregulated by a "me" is something like existential man, unfettered by those around him.

As the "I" and the "me" interact with one another, the individual actor decides upon the specific actions which he will initiate. Rose explains that the "I" is the "response of the organism to the attitudes of the others" which are mirrored in the "me." An act is chosen as the person tests the response sets of the "I" against the community as con-

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[65]Natanson, The Social Dynamics of George Herbert Mead, p. 15.

[66]Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, "Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Directions," in their Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 17.

tained in the "me."[67] Desmonde indicates that the "me" causes adjustments in the ongoing behavior of the "I."

> It is in this manner that it is possible for other people to influence permanently our lives. A person who is important to us is internalized in the form of a "me" which modifies the course of our ongoing behavior. The altered, or adjusted, response of the organism to the imported reaction of the other is termed by Mead the "I."[68]

CONCLUSION

In sum: purpose represents the goals that man addresses himself to; motive is the reason that the goals are chosen; and role-taking and the internal dialogue of the "I" and the "me" are the mechanisms by which various motives are "played off against one another" in the determination of which goals to choose in a given situation. And, because the symbolic interactionists are ever-concerned with the influence of symbols in human interaction, this entire process is accomplished through linguistic mediation. Action, the subject of the previous chapter, concerns the attempt to achieve the chosen goals. To recast the process of motivation in terms of the act, motive states may be considered as basic to the impulse stage of the act, for they are the felt needs which seek release through action. The determination of which motives will be enforced in a given situation, and of which goals will be chosen, take place in the manipulatory stage of the act--the time during which the internal dialogue chooses the prospectively most productive course of action. So, purpose--made up of motives, role-taking, and the dialogue of the self--is a prior matter, addressed to discovering the directions that action should take.

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[67]Rose, "A Systematic Summary," pp. 11-12.

[68]Desmonde, "The Position of George Herbert Mead," p. 60.

Chapter 6

IMPLICATIONS OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTION: THE NATURE OF RHETORIC

I have a rather strong urge to entitle this chapter "The New Rhetoric," but to do so would now be somewhat old. Marie Nichols has twice pre-empted that option,[1] as has Chaim Perelman in his exhaustive one-shot effort.[2] But symbolic interaction theory does indeed provide a "new" basis for theories of rhetoric. In fact, such an orientation is at the heart of Kenneth Burke's work and has guided the thoughts of several recent contributors to the journals. It remains a "new" basis, though, because so much of the thinking done by rhetorical scholars remains firmly grounded in Aristotle and because those who look at rhetoric from other disciplines fail to perceive that there has been an ever accelerating move toward re-casting the foundation upon which rhetorical theory is built. In a way, the formulation of the new rhetoric is a public relations problem, for as Winterowd has discovered,

> To the great majority, rhetoric means (a) handbook rubrics on "how to" write or "how to" speak; (b) mendacious bombast. Even avowed rhetoricians limit themselves to narrow ranges of their subject, as, for instance, the methods of writing good sentences

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[1]See Marie Hochmuth Nichols, "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVIII (1952), pp. 133-44, and "I. A. Richards and the 'New Rhetoric,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIV (1958), pp. 1-16.

[2]See Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

> and paragraphs, the art of public speaking, or the study of figures.[3]

A theory of rhetoric must be a theory of all instrumental use of language. The symbolic interactionists provide the backdrop for such a theory, whether the rhetorical scene be one speaker addressing an audience of many, one writer addressing a national readership, one person conversing with another, one person writing to a close friend, or even one person addressing himself.

For most of this century the basis of the teaching of rhetoric has been predominantly Aristotelian. In the field of speech communication the theory of Aristotle and his Roman followers has reigned over all. Basic speech texts for "speaker-audience" classes[4] have been firmly grounded in Aristotelian rhetoric--so much so, in fact, that one is tempted to ask why we have not cut out the middlemen and used the original Rhetoric or a derivative Roman work as the text for these courses. Courses in rhetorical theory have centered around Aristotle to the point that even modern rhetoric has often been taught in a "neo-Aristotelian" vein. The classic critical efforts sponsored by the now renamed Speech Association of America--the volumes of the History and Criticism of American Public Address[5] and Anti-Slavery and Disunion[6]--contained chapter

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[3]W. Ross Winterowd, Rhetoric: A Synthesis (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), v.

[4]See, for example, Alan H. Monroe and Douglas Ehninger, Principles and Types of Speech (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967).

[5]See W. Norwood Brigance, ed., History and Criticism of American Public Address, I and II (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943) and Marie Hochmuth (Nichols), ed., History and Criticism of American Public Address, III (New York: Longmans, Green, 1955).

[6]See J. Jeffery Auer, ed., Anti-Slavery and Disunion, 1858-1861 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

after chapter modeled in some form of Aristotelian schema. Indeed, the most acclaimed text in rhetorical criticism, Thonssen and Baird's Speech Criticism,[7] reads like a history of rhetorical theory and strongly recommends the use of Aristotelian forms in speech evaluation.

Change has come slowly to the students of rhetoric housed in departments of speech. Though Kenneth Burke's strikingly different Rhetoric of Motives[8] appeared in 1950 it was slow to have significant impact in our field. Marie Nichols, true, did formally introduce the readers of the Quarterly Journal of Speech to Burke only two years later. But her treatment of Burke, and that of her student Virginia Holland[9], made broad attempts to "marry" Burke to Aristotle. The terministic screens constructed over a half-century of Aristotelian rhetoric courses and books have been hard to break indeed. Not until recently have writers in speech journals begun to regularly take excursions into rhetorical theory without leaning on a refinished "olive-branch" cane.[10]

Few theorists argue that the Aristotelian approach should be

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[7]See Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: Ronald Press, 1948).

[8]See Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1969).

[9]See Virginia L. Holland, "Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Approach in Speech Criticism," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLI (1955), pp. 352-58.

[10]Several excellent examples of the newer approach have recently appeared in the journals. Among them are Herbert Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," Pennsylvania Speech Annual, XXIV (1967), pp. 7-20; Otis M. Walter, "On Views of Rhetoric, Whether Conservative or Progressive," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIX (1963), pp. 367-82; and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), pp. 97-108.

abandoned. But many now agree with Brockriede's dictum that "Because Aristotle's Rhetoric was so appropriately related to the relatively simple Greek society of his day, it predictably is less suited as a theory to explain the more complex and very different rhetorical practices of today . . ."[11] A rhetoric based in symbolic interaction theory fits quite well with Brockriede's position here: it does not deny Aristotle that which is Aristotle's, but it does go far enough beyond the classical approach to be appropriately termed "new" or "different." It supplements the standard term "persuasion" with the broader term "identification." It takes our horizons past the "speaker-to-audience" relationship so often ascribed to Aristotelian theory to include as a direct part of the theory all instrumental use of discourse. Thus, the rhetoric that will be described in the remaining chapters does not reject Aristotle. Rather, it sort of incorporates him into a larger whole, relying upon his assumptions where they are applicable and going beyond them where they are not.

The times that we live in are, as Brockriede says, far more complex than were the times of Aristotle. Further, they are far more complex than the days in the earlier parts of this century. With the complexity of the times have come problems in society that simply would not yield to older means of solution. In such times, says Johnstone, "the need for a philosophical examination of rhetoric is most acute . . ."[12]

Kenneth Burke is a social critic who agonized through the harsh realities of the twenties and thirties and suffered through the tyranny

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[11]Wayne Brockriede, "Toward a Contemporary Aristotelian Theory of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LII (1966), p. 34.

[12]Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Philosophy and of Philosophy to Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LII (1966), p. 44.

of the war years. In the decay he perceived in those years he saw the failure of older means of social management. His writings, touched with a clearly moral and humanistic intent, are predominantly aimed at producing a new approach to social order. Out of the search for this approach has come what Brockriede--as well as many others--describes as "the closest attempt to formulate a contemporary theory" of rhetoric.[13] His approach to rhetoric bears much the same relationship to the classical theory that we have already described. According to Fogarty, "His work is an extension of Aristotelian rhetoric rather than a conflicting theory. The extension, however, is so vast . . . that he calls it a 'new' rhetoric."[14] In a recent lecture, still somewhat overly emphatic in an attempt to join Aristotle and Burke, Nichols provides a fairly clear overview of the Burkean approach:

> Burke does not throw out the old rhetorical devices that many of us have sometimes thought to be the whole of rhetoric. What he does is to provide a rationale. All of structure as we know it, whether in speech, or story, is treated as a mode of identification . . . One identifies himself by thinking of structure in terms of the psychology of the audience.[15]

Burke might be appropriately described, in his words, as the "key term" in theorizing about rhetoric from the symbolic interactionists' point of view, and the "key term" in his theory is identification. But Burke is not the sum total of that theoretical position. Simons widens the angle of vision crediting "the joint efforts . . . of small group

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[13]Brockriede, "Toward a Contemporary Aristotelian Theory," p. 35.

[14]Daniel Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), p. 57.

[15]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 88.

theorists, of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, of industrial sociologists and political scientists and of persons in Speech" with providing the bases upon which this broader theory of rhetoric can be built. The hallmarks of this theory, he says, are made up of

> The shared concern with interactive rhetorical discourse, and the consequent reformulation of speech principles and redirection of teaching and research energies . . . Still another defining feature of the new rhetoric that has been referred to is its objective of judiciously "managing" social problems, a normative goal orientation, which is contrasted with the normative framework of neo-Aristotelian rhetoric. . .[16]

Karlyn Campbell capsulizes the symbolic interactionists approach to rhetoric a bit differently: " . . . the discipline of rhetoric is generally the study of the ways in which one man's symbolic behavior influences that of another man."[17]

"RHETORIC": THE RANGE OF MEANINGS

"So let Rhetoric be defined as the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."[18] From this short sentence came the definition of rhetoric that scholars in our field turned to with amazing regularity for nearly half a century. Those addressing the subject of rhetoric who felt moved to define it have generally either quoted Aristotle directly or have fashioned a definition derived from this stem. Rhetoric has been persuasion centered.

The first apparent break from this position occurred in Donald

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[16]Herbert W. Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 55-6.

[17]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 103.

[18]Aristotle, The Rhetoric of Aristotle, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 7.

Bryant's 1952 re-naming of the function of rhetoric as "adjusting ideas to people and of people to ideas."[19] While this conception may seem broader than the Aristotelian view, it was not meant to be. Bryant elsewhere in the article declared rhetoric to be the "rationale of informative and suasory discourse," and made clear his Aristotelian stance by explaining "This rhetoric has been, at least since Aristotle . . . Its limitations are historical rather than philosophical."[20] More than a decade later Richard Ohmann still echoed this position:

> Great though the difference is between rhetoric as mysterious power and rhetoric as calculated procedure, these two conceptions share one feature which . . . is the most important one: both take rhetoric to be concerned, fundamentally, with persuasion.[21]

And philosopher-rhetorician Maurice Natanson agrees: in identifying four senses in which the term "rhetoric" is used he simply approaches rhetoric-as-persuasion from four different angles.[22]

Persuasion, then, has been at the core of twentieth century rhetoric. But though this has been the predominant definition, other authors have parried with contrasting definitions, some close to the more accepted definition and some relatively far removed. Ohmann reviews this variety of alternate definitions:

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[19]Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Scope," The Province of Rhetoric, eds. Joseph Schwartz and John A. Rycenga (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1965), p. 19.

[20]Ibid., p. 7.

[21]Richard Ohmann, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 64.

[22]Maurice Natanson, "The Limits of Rhetoric," Philosophy, Rhetoric and Argumentation, eds. Maurice Natanson and Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), p. 101.

> I. A. Richards has it that rhetoric "should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies," . . . Daniel Fogarty in a book called Roots for a New Rhetoric: rhetoric is "the science of recognizing the range of the meanings and of the functions of words, and the art of using and interpreting them in accordance with this function." . . . Korzybski and Hayakawa: the rhetorician, in their view, should work to quiet the insistent clamor of words, which, if left to themselves, tend to drown out experience and reality. Kenneth Burke takes a different line: according to him, "The key term for the 'new' rhetoric would be 'identification.'" Rhetoric should be built on the "consubstantiality" of men, their shared modes of feeling, thought, and action. Its goal is cooperation.[23]

Ohmann lists several other competing definitions, but the implication of this cataloging should be clear: from time to time scholars have found the old definitions wanting and have set out to re-define the field, hoping to make it more serviceable to the "man" each of them sees.

The definition that the symbolic interactionists might seek for rhetoric must flow from the Burkean notion of identification, consubstantiality, and cooperation--the joining of man in the search for "a better life." Karlyn Campbell has become one of the loudest of the recent advocates of this orientation. In her new text she defines rhetoric in a seemingly Aristotelian fashion as "persuasive discourses, written and oral, that alter attitudes and actions." But her point of view is only seemingly Aristotelian. She further explains:

> At times the term can and should be used in a much broader sense. That usage includes functions other than persuasion such as interpersonal identification, confrontation, self-identification, alienation, negotiation; and it includes forms other than written and oral discourse such as gestural communication, the use of space, and certain dimensions of music, dance, painting.[24]

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[23]Ohmann, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," pp. 64-5.

[24]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 2.

Thus this "new" rhetoric ventures far beyond the "persuasive use of language" which is generally seen to bound the more classical sense of the term. McNally chooses to approach the subject from the standpoint of semiotic. Of the three divisions of semiotic, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics, McNally chooses to place rhetoric at home in pragmatics: "Thus, if it can be determined that the 'sense' of a piece of discourse resides chiefly in . . . the address to interpreters' responses, it is 'pragmatically oriented discourse.'"[25]

What, then, can we include in rhetoric so conceived? Certainly, as Burke claims, instruction--which is surely a pragmatic use of discourse--introduces "a principle that can widen the scope of rhetoric beyond persuasion." Add to that "exposition, description, communication in general." Indeed, "you can derive contemporary 'semantics' as an aspect of rhetoric,"[26] for semanticists are certainly concerned with the pragmatics of discourse. Herbert Simons adds to the list: the rhetorician is concerned with "promoting understanding," "reconciliation of viewpoints," "negotiations of compromise," arbitration, and "de-escalation of conflict."[27] Beyond this Burke even calls "belonging" rhetorical[28]--group affiliation has quite pragmatic aspects. And, of course, the idealist's view of the pragmatist's downfall, "sly design," must also be "named" as rhetorical.[29]

If rhetoric is, as claimed here, a rationale for pragmatically oriented

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[25]James Richard McNally, "Toward a Definition of Rhetoric," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), pp. 76-7.

[26]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 77.

[27]Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," pp. 60-1.

[28]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, pp. 27-8.

[29]Ibid., p. 37.

symbolic behavior (including, of course, both verbal and non-verbal "discourse"), are there any clear boundaries that separate what discourse is "rhetorical and what discourse is "extra-rhetorical?" Or, is rhetoric some amorphous blob that is determined to become all at the risk of being nothing? Surely a pragmatic angle can be found in practically any piece of discourse.

The line that must be drawn is admittedly an unclear one. The position I am arguing can be summed up briefly: (1) Most all discourse is, in some way, rhetorical in that it has a pragmatic side to it; but, (2) most discourse also has non-pragmatic aspects. Burke has delineated three angles from which language can be viewed--grammar, symbolic, and rhetoric.[30] Thus, a given piece of discourse has grammatical or logical aspects, symbolic or aesthetic aspects, and rhetorical or pragmatic aspects. Therefore, (3) not all aspects of language fall into the realm of rhetoric. One may study language from any of the three angles. In this way I claim that rhetoric may be relevant to all given instances of the use of language, but so may grammar and symbolic. A poem, a speech, an essay, a play, a protest march, or even silence may be studied from all three perspectives. Rhetoric, then, is not all inclusive of language. It is simply one way of looking at language that happens to allow us to look at most all instances of language usage.

Put another way, we may begin with language as the given. Because language may be used in a pragmatic, or social, sense for the fulfillment of social goal through a social act it may be used rhetorically and such usage may be studied from the standpoint of rhetoric. (The distinction here between use and study is the distinction drawn by Burke between rhetorica

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[30] For a more complete explanation of the approaches to language represented by grammar, rhetoric, and symbolic, see Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1969), xv-xxiii.

utens and rhetorica docens.[31]) The same instance of language usage may, however, also be studied from the "logistic" standpoint of grammar; how the word unit operates structurally. Likewise, this example of language use can be studied under the heading of symbolic, with primary attention being given to the aesthetics of the discourse. As the old professor might say, clearly, the lines marking off the three areas are unclear. As we look at language gramatically, it is most difficult to ignore totally its rhetorical aspects; and as we look at language rhetorically it is most difficult to ignore its "symbolic" aspects; and so on. But back to the main point: we can look at most any instance of language usage rhetorically, but language has clearly extra-rhetorical aspects.

At base, then, the theory of rhetoric posited by the symbolic interactionists' perspective emphasizes the pragmatic aspects of language usage: the use of language to achieve social goals through social action. The key term for this outlook on rhetoric is identification, not persuasion. And this key term broadens the scope of rhetoric far beyond the boundary, normally associated with persuasion, of acquiescence to the persuader's position.

THE CONSTITUENTS OF PRAGMATICS AND THE NATURE OF RHETORIC

Pragmatic orientation, at the base of the symbolic interactionists' approach to rhetoric, implies several related components of a theory of rhetoric. These components, put together, form an outline of the basic nature of rhetoric. The remainder of this chapter is addressed to an explication of these constituents of pragmatics.

Directly implied by a pragmatic orientation is the concept of audience. The pragmatic orientation requires the presence of social

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[31]See Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 36.

action, and for "social" action to take place an audience must be involved. (This audience may be, of course, many other people, one other person, or the "me" as with an internal dialogue of the self.) The rhetorical use of discourse, then, requires that the discourse be "addressed" to some sort of audience.[32] Addressed language is not only language which is "aimed at" an audience (intended for a specific audience to hear) but it is also "tailored to" that audience. Thus, in the words of Fogarty, to proceed by argumentation a speaker must "proceed according to their way of thinking." And, "If he persuades by emotion, he must somehow, sincerely or not, feel the way his audience will be expected to feel."[33]

Language which is addressed, then, requires that the language user be active in role-taking behavior; for it is only through role-taking that one person can discover another's way of thinking or that he can "feel the way his audience will be expected to feel." According to Wilkerson,

> Communicative activity is seen to originate in the interaction of a person with his social environment which ordinarily includes other persons. Certain features of the communicated message will be determined by this initial interaction. . . . The message is highly determined by the combination of circumstances. . .[34]

The symbolic interactionists' concept of audience, or address, is slightly different than the one derived from Aristotelian principles. The Aristotelian position urges the rhetor to conduct an "audience analysis," true, but the type of thing most often recommended by most speech texts is less inclusive than that recommended by the present broader theory. We are

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[32] Ibid., p. 38.

[33] Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric, p. 75.

[34] K. E. Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 90.

told, most often, to search out the audience's age, sex, group affiliation, occupation, and other such characteristics. We are then urged to shape our messages in a way that will make them appeal to the qualities and beliefs related to the characteristics we have discovered in a particular audience. But never is it clear that we are to go beyond the cognitive level in carrying out this operation. Role-taking, which is at the very heart of pragmatic "address" forces us to actually play the role of the person or group we plan to later communicate with. It cajoles us not only to realize that a man is a coal miner, but to also try to catch the feelings of the coal miner and "live his life" for at least a brief moment. Obviously such an approach cannot be successfully executed each time it is tried, but the instruction that it puts before us is more complete and gives the rhetor a deeper goal to try to reach.

A second constituent of pragmatic orientation is "identification," that elusive Burkeian term which can encompass all that "persuasion" includes but can also go far beyond.[35] In one of his more direct moments, Burke attempts to set down the delineation he has drawn between persuasion and identification:

> All told, persuasion ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as in sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education, and the sermon, to a "pure" form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose. And identification ranges from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers says, "I was a farm boy myself," through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic's devout identification with the source of all being.[36]

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[35]The concept of identification will be more fully explored in ensuing chapters. The purpose for including it here is merely to note its place in a pragmatically based view of rhetoric.

[36]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, xiv.

Rhetoric involves both persuasion and identification, with Burke claiming that the latter term can include the former. Identification is, at base, a partial unity of men. It provides the means by which the rhetorician may "feel" as another feels. As such, it is a key to role-taking behavior. As Fogarty says, "Burke's identification is really consubstantiality. It means that things or people, different in other ways, may have one common factor in which they are consubstantial or substantially the same."[37] In the thought stage of the social act a person seeks out the point(s) of consubstantiality he and the "audience" share. Having found these "substantially alike" beliefs or feelings he can test his ideas against the "internalized other" and project the likely reaction to them.

But identification can also serve as a technique of persuasion in the traditional sense. For example, says Burke, "a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications," or for the purpose of "causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests," or he may draw "on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience."[38]

Thus identification can be a pre-communicative means of testing an idea on an internalized audience. In this role, Fogarty explains, it "is temporarily and topically assuming the rational, emotional, and motivational level of one's audience for the purpose of communicating motivational meaning."[39] Or, it can be a means of producing persuasion in the communicative act itself. In this sense, it

> is a belonging to a group of people or becoming one with them through at least some one formality

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[37]Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric, p. 74.

[38]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 46.

[39]Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric, p. 76.

> of common purpose or ideal. As applied to rhetoric in this sense, identification says everything that persuasion says . . .[40]

In a way, identification serves both as a primary mechanism of rhetoric and as the prime rhetorical motive. Identification is a state of being that man constantly seeks. But to Burke we can never think long of identification without also encountering division. Division is the "stimulus" that sets off man's specific searches for identification. Thus rhetoric arises out of division; rhetoric is spawned by division; or, in Ehninger's analysis, rhetoric is a social force "arising out of an atmosphere of divisiveness /which/ can promote consubstantiality and peace through the process of identification."[41] As Burke puts it, the study of the actions of an individual will fall under the jurisdiction of rhetoric "insofar as the individual is involved in conflict with other individuals or groups."[42]

As we base rhetoric in division, a third derivative of the assumption of a pragmatic base for rhetoric arises: its problem-solving nature. Division among men implies disharmony. When social disharmony exists the constant search for consubstantiality and "the better life" is thwarted. Rhetoric, as a means of establishing identification in society (and, concomitantly, as a means of moving man toward this basic motive), provides the way to

> lead us through the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Market Place, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard, the Give and Take, the wavering line of pressure and counterpressure, the Logomachy, the onus of ownership, the Wars of Nerves, the War.[43]

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[40]Ibid., p. 75.

[41]Douglas Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 334.

[42]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 23.

[43]Ibid.

The pressures and divisions we experience in everyday life, in the conduct of business, and in the halls of government are rife with problems. Rhetoric, in its power to guide us through these pressures and problems--in its power, if you will, to use smaller identifications to lead us to larger and more satisfying ones--is problem-solving by nature. And this problem-solving nature of the new rhetoric again marks a slight departure from the persuasion centered nature of the old. True, persuasion qua persuasion can be and often is considered as problem-solving. But the problem that is often solved with the classic conception of persuasion is the problem facing the speaker--and he solves it by cajoling the audience to "come over" to his point of view. Certainly this is within the realm of the new rhetoric. Burke is careful to clearly retain most of what was contained in the Aristotelian system. But the new rhetoric places a slightly different emphasis which is, again, broader in scope. As Simons interprets this new emphasis, the concentration of the "new rhetoric is on problem-solving or problem-reduction rather than persuasion; on mutually satisfactory resolutions of differences rather than victory for one party."[44]

Now, any time a person faces a problem and attempts to solve it he--of necessity--lays out some sort of plan to guide him. If he did not, he would have to take purely random stabs, retreating from conscious action to animal-like "motion," helplessly probing again and again until he, quite by accident, made the "right" move. The plan that he lays out, whether simple or complex and whether carefully thought through or undertaken "habitually," is nothing more nor less than a strategy. And this is the fourth derivative of a pragmatic orientation to rhetoric: rhetorical acts are strategic acts.

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[44]Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," p. 58.

Strategy has, of late, fallen on bad times in the dictionary of moral judgments. Honesty and openness have become the words of the day, thankfully. But too many of those who have brought openness to the forefront of human action have chosen to define it as the opposite of strategy. Strategy has come to be viewed as "pure manipulation," sneaky, cruel, and cursed. This dichotomy is clearly a false one, and one which must be done away with.

The new rhetoric of the symbolic interactionist has the capability to remove these unsavory labels from strategic action and, hence, from much of rhetoric. This is so because this rhetoric, according to Onmann, emphasizes cooperation and social cohesion, identification, and common action as the means of overcoming resistance to desirable or desired courses of action.[45] Such cooperative action is clearly strategic: in a previous chapter I argued that of all the types of action available to us, joint action was by far the hardest to successfully accomplish. This is so because the separate efforts of two persons must be coordinated. Such coordination could hardly be achieved if strategies were not planned by the participants in the action.

A second, similar problem has recently beset students of "speech," "rhetoric," and "communication." The journals and convention rooms have been more than spotted with "disgruntled rhetoricians," those who came to regret what they perceived to be an over-emphasis on manipulation in the practice of rhetoric. Throwing out the baby with the bath they abandoned the term "rhetoric" and pretended to abandon all that is included within

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[45]Richard L. Johannesen, Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 63.

that term. "Communication," for them, has become the word of the day. And, naturally, since they rebelled against manipulation they deny the presence of manipulation in "communication." With it, some also deny the efficacy of persuasion, strategy, and the other terms that may be similarly clustered. The result of all this, of course, has been a rather nasty split in the field. Again, the dichotomy is a false one which many perceive to be true. The problem may well be a matter of emphasis and, likewise, a shift in emphasis may hold at least a partial solution.

The new rhetoric provides the emphasis which might heal the wound. Brockriede helps to provide the explanation of this. First, he reminds us, the setting out of which classical rhetoric developed was a "one-to-many" public address situation. The techniques and strategems which exemplified that rhetoric were appropriate to that situation, and still are. However, they are not appropriate to the more interactive nature of today's problem-solving methods. Even the television set has a strangely "person-to-person" quality about it. Brockriede concludes:

> If contemporary practice is essentially interactive, the theorist, accordingly, might appropriately be concerned along a personal dimension with the images that speakers and audiences have of themselves and of one another, along an ideational dimension with the strategies for material and formal identification, and with the conditions under which the reciprocal images and attitudes of speaker and audiences may change.[46]

Further, because of the emerging openness of communication in our society high status persons may address lower status persons, low status persons may address higher status persons, and persons of

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[46]Brockriede, "Toward a Contemporary Aristotelian Theory," pp. 35-7.

approximately equal status address each other. To complicate matters, a person's relative status changes as he moves from situation to situation. Thus the rhetorician may well speak in all three status relationships in a given day. In Brockriede's words, "Classical rhetoric provides no precepts of which I am aware to account for these complexities in status relationship."[47] Rhetoric based in identification and cooperation can provide a means to bridge these status relationships. As individuals participate in role-taking in a joint effort to solve their problems we observe a cooperative rhetoric in operation, one in which status differences have little impact.

We can further clear up this "communication-rhetoric" dichotomy by recalling the view of language that the symbolic interactionist and his pragmatically based rhetoric holds. Language, in this theory, is considered as "a moral, suasive act."[48] Language is persuasive by its very nature. As Burke puts it, the essential function of language is its use "as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."[49] Thus, appeal becomes the essence of communication. It cannot be avoided, as the words we use are charged with moral overtones and emotional loadings. And, for Burke, appeal is the "rhetorical function of language."[50] The point is simply this: if language is viewed as inherently persuasive, then it is not possible to

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[47] Ibid., p. 37.

[48] Winterowd, Rhetoric: A Synthesis, p. 14.

[49] Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 43.

[50] Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism, p. 83.

achieve "transfer of information, and nothing else." Any "transmission" of language carries with it certain persuasive images. Each person, through his past experiences with language, has built up meanings for terms that are emotionally charged. When a given phrase is again heard in a familiar situation many of these stored up meanings are released, and the discourse becomes persuasive whether the speaker intended it to be or not. Thus any separation of "rhetoric" from "communication" in an attempt to get rid of the persuasive and strategic connotations is futile.

CONCLUSION: RHETORIC AS A THEORY OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

The rhetoric of the symbolic interactionist is, as Ehninger says, social or sociological.[51] Its orientation is pragmatic, meaning that it emphasizes the use of language for the achievement of both individual and joint social goals. The basic function of such a rhetoric, according to Burke, is "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents."[52] The primary motive guiding man in the use of rhetoric is identification, which Burke has called the primary force behind most all human action. Rhetoric, then, is used by man in a search for "the better life" achieved through increasing levels of consubstantiality. Further, as man seeks ever increasing identifications with his fellows he bases his appeals on the lesser identifications that have developed in the past. Thus as prior goals of consubstantiality have been met they have turned into appeals designed to meet present

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[51]Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," p. 333.

[52]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 41.

and future goals.

The rhetor in such a system "searches out" present points of identification with his "audience" so that he may tailor his appeal specifically to them. This we have termed "address." Because men have not reached a satisfactory stage of identification or consubstantiality, society is in a constant state of division. This division, of course, produces uneasiness because of the strength of man's identificatory motive. And, as rhetoric operates to allay the divisions it works in a problem-solving manner. In addition, because man is by nature an "actor" he most commonly "plots out" his approaches to a problematic situation, acting in a strategic manner. His primary agent in carrying out a strategy is a language which is filled with persuasiveness and emotion.

In sum: the new rhetoric of the symbolic interactionists shifts the emphasis from what Simons calls the "personal effectiveness of a speaker" to "the social effectiveness of alternative patterns of managing social problems."[53] We may conclude with Ehninger, then, that this rhetoric is "an instrument for understanding and improving human relations."[54]

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[53]Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," p. 56.

[54]Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," p. 333.

Chapter 7

THE NATURE OF THE RHETORICAL ACT

It should be clear by now that rhetoric is an act, in the symbolic interactionists' sense of the term. First, as Bitzer maintains, rhetorical acts grow out of the situation a person perceives himself to be in.[1] A rhetorical act begins with an impulse--a "felt want" in the form of a motive--searching the environment for a situation which will release it. The individual perceives the "stimulus" in the environment which will set the impulse on course. He next tests ways of satisfying the impulse by "internally manipulating" the environment. Having found what he believes to be the most effective way of satisfying the impulse, he then consummates the act by making an overt symbolic response to the situation. The rhetor's behavior is both minded and purposive; both motivated and mediated. Indeed, to call rhetoric an act may well be an understatement. We might more accurately maintain that all true "acts" are in some sense rhetorical, for all acts can be symbolic and--as was claimed in the preceding chapter--all symbolic behavior can be interpreted in a rhetorical sense.

But rhetoric so considered becomes a "fuzzy" discipline, one which overlaps so badly with other disciplines that its focus may sometimes be lost. It is the purpose of this chapter to define more closely the

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[1]See Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (1968), pp. 1-14.

scope of rhetoric and to examine those elements the symbolic interactionists might name as its component parts.

Karlyn Campbell maintains that a symbolic interaction based rhetoric must always have unclear boundaries because it is "in effect the study of all language." But to her this is not a weakness which should thwart the development of the theory. Rather, it is "precisely the price we shall have to pay in order to have the latitude needed to theorize about and examine the many language acts which do not fall easily into neat classifications of purpose or genre."[2] One of the criticisms most recently leveled at traditional theories of rhetoric is its inability to account for many types of symbolic behavior which bear a striking resemblance to rhetoric, but which cannot be catalogued as rhetoric in the old terminology. A Burkeian rhetoric, growing out of and coordinated with the social theories of symbolic interactionism, widens the boundaries so as to account for these other types of symbolic behavior.

But though Campbell sees value in "blurred boundaries," some attempt must be made to clarify at least minimal limits; otherwise a "theory" of rhetoric would be an impossibility. In this chapter two of Wilkerson's "desiderata" for a theory of rhetoric will be set forth: the scope of rhetoric will be examined to make clearer the natural boundaries of the theory and some of the components of rhetorical behavior will be described to "specify a set of phenomena which can be readily observed . . ."[3]

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[2]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 106.

[3]K. E. Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), pp. 83-4.

THE SCOPE OF RHETORIC: PRAGMATIC SYMBOLIC BEHAVIOR

In the previous chapter rhetoric was grounded in the pragmatic use of symbols. Fogarty summarily explains the breadth that this grounding gives rhetorical theory; " . . . the whole range of this activity, from a man's inner, subconscious conflicts to the highest kind of conscious abstraction, is rhetoric."[4] More specifically, according to Nichols, the scope of rhetoric includes "any and all symbolic resources that function to promote social cohesion, and all symbolic resources that induce attitude or action."[5]

More specifically, Wilkerson presents a seven element model of communication, noting that four of its elements are uniquely rhetorical. The elements of the model which are essential to any act of communication are a message produced with which the speaker responds to his social context, an external feedback loop, and an audience--actual or anticipated. To these he adds the four features which are "fundamentally rhetorical ones." These are: an internal feedback loop, or anticipation mechanism; communicative problems which impede the message; a speaker's control mechanism; and choice from among a variety of possible message features which could eliminate or modify the problem.[6] All uses of language which contain the latter four features can be considered rhetorical.

But we can approach the "scope" of rhetoric in other ways. Rhetoric has traditionally been viewed as operating most clearly in a persuasive speaker-audience situation. For the most part, though not universally,

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[4]Daniel Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 70.

[5]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 84.

[6]Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," pp. 92-3.

interpersonal and intrapersonal communication have not been regularly included under the rubric of rhetoric.

The scope of the symbolic interactionists' rhetoric, however, emphasizes that both interpersonal and intrapersonal communication can be rhetorical. McNally, first of all, argues that rhetoric is concerned with "those aspects of education, behavior, or linguistic usage wherein symbols are regarded . . . as mediators between men rather than as pure symbols or as mediators between men and things."[7] By such a definition, interpersonal communication must clearly be rhetorical in nature. Don Burks furthers the argument by applying the concept of risk to conversation or negotiation:

> In an argumentative situation where risk is established, where there is willingness for individuals to engage in mutual persuasion, the affective world of feeling and attitude or "the total subtle range of /the self's/ affective and conative sensibility" is, in Natanson's phrase, "existentially disrupted." Here, surely, are important insights into the nature of the type of rhetorical discourse which Natanson calls the "rhetoric of persuading": (1) it directs itself to the conative . . . as much as to the cognitive, and (2) such a persuasive situation is mutual--one who would persuade the Other must be willing to be persuaded by the Other.[8]

Viewed in this way, interpersonal rhetoric is a certainty.

Likewise, intrapersonal communication is rhetorical, for just as we may attempt to persuade or increase identity with an other or a group of others, we may also attempt to persuade ourselves or bring our own constructs, beliefs, and attitudes into greater harmony. Burks argues

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[7]James Richard McNally, "Toward a Definition of Rhetoric," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 72.

[8]Don M. Burks, "Persuasion, Self-Persuasion, Rhetorical Discourse," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (1970), p. 111.

the point, going so far as to claim that no real difference exists between "the persuasion of another and the persuasion of self." Further, he says,

> once a position is arrived at through investigation and/or argument, there often needs to be an urging or appeal to take action in accord with or to accept a commitment to the finding. The urging or appealing may be to self or to others or to both at once.[9]

The symbolic interactionist's theory of action, implemented through role-taking and an internal dialogue of the self makes the rhetorical nature of intrapersonal communication immediately apparent. The internal dialogue is conducted in order to choose a course of action which is most likely to achieve a set goal. Thus, the dialogue itself has a goal which is social in nature, bringing it into the realm of pragmatics or rhetoric. But the symbolic interactionists' emphasis of the motive of identification also makes clear the rhetorical nature of intrapersonal communication. As Burke comments,

> The individual person, striving to form himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society, is by the same token concerned with the rhetoric of identification. To act upon himself persuasively, he must variously resort to images and ideas that are formative. Education ("indoctrination") exerts such pressure upon him from without; he completes the process from within.[10]

The notion of intrapersonal rhetoric may be summarized by noting the work of Charles Stevenson, as mediated through the screens of Don Burks. He argues that people "argue" in pretended social settings both in rehearsal

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[9] Ibid., p. 112.

[10] Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 39.

for coming interpersonal interaction and in an attempt to sway themselves.[11]

To this point a strong implication may have developed that one of the boundaries of rhetoric is "consciousness of action." Internal dialogue aimed at finding sound courses of action, interpersonal rhetoric which--via the previous chapter--involves the setting and execution of strategies, and attempts to convince oneself of something somehow imply that the rhetor is in conscious control of his actions. But the new rhetoric does not recognize consciousness as a boundary line. This theory of rhetoric, according to Ehninger, includes "appeals which are at least partially 'unconscious' . . ." This provides, again, "a more comprehensive picture of the role which rhetorical forces play in promoting social cohesion and effecting social control."[12] This inclusion of the "unconscious" in the field of rhetoric originated with Burke. We can, therefore, better understand how man's unconscious "actions" can be considered as actions per se by turning to Burke's statement:

> . . . there is a wide range of ways whereby the rhetorical motive, through the resources of identification can operate without conscious direction by any particular agent. . . . one can systematically extend the range of rhetoric, if one studies the persuasiveness of false or inadequate terms which may not be directly imposed upon us from without by some skillful speaker, but which we impose upon ourselves, in varying degrees of deliberateness and unawareness, through motives indeterminately self-protective and/or suicidal.[13]

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[11]Burks, "Persuasion, Self-Persuasion," p. 115.

[12]Douglas Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 334-35.

[13]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 35.

Ehninger warns that allowing totally unconscious actions to be considered as rhetorical might well cause rhetoric to "lose it's identity as a discrete discipline."[14] His fear is that pure stimulus-response situations might come to be considered as rhetorical. The Burkeian position, however, does not go far enough into the realm of the unconscious to face this danger. As he says, "There is an intermediate area of expression that is not wholly deliberate, yet not wholly unconscious. It lies midway between aimless utterance and speech directly purposive."[15] Burke never classifies the "unconscious" as rhetorical, only the "not-conscious." Things would probably be simpler if Burke more often chose directly meaningful and identifiable terms, in this case "sub-conscious."

The key to understanding "sub-conscious" rhetoric lies toward the end of this long statement of Burke. For even as he speaks of actions of which we are not wholly conscious, he still indicates that motives, not drives or "instincts," are responsible for these actions. Motives can become so ingrained and deep-seated that we eventually become unaware that they are operating to guide our actions. Motives, in other words, can become habitual. In the earlier description of the act, which we determined was mediated and projected in a thought stage, room was left for subconscious action: actions in response to a situation undertaken so often that they become habitual. In the case of these actions, man does not fully mediate or think through them each time the appropriate environmental situation arises--he "knows" from past experiences that a

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[14]Ehninger, "On Systems of Rhetoric," p. 335.

[15]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, xiii.

certain action is the appropriate one. At one time in the past these actions were mediated each time they were undertaken, but they have been repeated so often that such mediation is no longer necessary. In identical manner, motives which guide rhetorical behavior which were once brought to conscious attention each time they were applied to a situation come to be habitual. Thus, "not-conscious" or "sub-conscious" rhetorical acts are still strategic acts, but the strategies were decided upon long in the past. Now they are simply applied as a routine matter of course.

Now, it is possible to view the scope of rhetoric from yet another angle: the forms in which rhetorical communication takes place. At one point Burke describes rhetoric as "essentially a realism of the act . . ."[16] As such, it can be found in one way or another in most any act. Thus, rhetoric can range from magic to formula, from witchcraft to medicine. As Wilkerson argues, "rhetorical activity cuts across the human communicative spectrum . . ."[17]

We may begin by noting that rhetoric is involved in all symbolic acts involving human choice and will. According to Burke, "Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man only insofar as he is free."[18]

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[16] Ibid., p. 44.

[17] Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," p. 83.

[18] Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 50. It may appear that rhetoric and persuasion are being equated here. They are not. Burke is writing, here, in that section of Rhetoric called "Traditional Principles of Rhetoric." Hence, he is talking of a system in which the two were basically considered to cover the same range. For example, he makes the statement that "Only insofar as men are potentially free, must the spellbinder seek to persuade them. Insofar as they must do something, rhetoric is unnecessary . . ." In this way, while it may sound as though I am equating the two terms, I am not. The view of the present study remains that persuasion is one rhetorical motive, but it does not encompass the whole of rhetoric.

Further, "insofar as a choice of action is restricted, rhetoric seeks rather to have a formative effect upon attitude."[19] And, as attitude is an incipient act held through the use of symbols, rhetoric seeks to have a formative effect upon symbolic action. Second, in the internal dialogue of the self during which a specific rhetorical act is selected to be later addressed to a specific audience, the rhetor himself exercises choice and will. Thus in two ways rhetoric is marked by the presence of these two elements.

It may be readily apparent that rhetoric, then, is involved in all forms of public deliberation. But it is well to list at least a few of these forms and explain how rhetoric operates in them. First, this rhetoric includes within its scope the various types of literature, insofar as they are "addressed" to a given audience. This is the other side of the coin which Wichelns once explored as "The Literary Criticism of Oratory."[20] For the symbolic interactionist, prose and poetry alike can be rhetorical. As Burke argues, "The prose reference is clearly rhetorical. It occurs in a work written with a definite audience in mind, and for a definite purpose."[21] Often the "poet," in the broader sense of the word, writes with double meaning, as in Biblical parables:

> In saying with fervor, that a blind Biblical hero did conquer, the poet is "substantially" saying that he in his blindness will conquer. This is moralistic prophecy, and is thus also a kind of "literature for use," use at one remove,

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[19] Ibid.

[20] See Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James A. Winans (New York: Century Company, 1925), pp. 181-216.

[21] Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 4.

> though of a sort that the technologically-minded would consider the very opposite of use, since it is wholly in the order of ritual and magic.[22]

The moralistic message of this type of "poetry" is clearly rhetorical in that it is a symbolic urging to incipient action. And, poetry in the more narrow sense of the term can also be considered rhetorical:

> . . . the notion of persuasion to attitude would permit the application of rhetorical terms to purely poetic structures; the study of lyrical devices might be classed under the head of rhetoric, when these devices are considered for their power to induce or communicate states of mind to readers . . ."[23]

Further, the claims of ethnologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and other such "social healers" may be considered rhetorical in that they "bear upon the persuasive aspects of language, the function of language as addressed, as direct or roundabout appeal to real or ideal audiences, without or within."[24] Johnstone adds to this list with his argument that "Politics and commerce use rhetoric to produce action . . . A political proposal which required no action would be a contradiction in terms, as would an item on the market which required neither seller nor buyer."[25] Johnstone goes on to argue that a philosophical conclusion, calling for no action at all, is independent of rhetoric. He claims that "philosophy literally has no need for rhetoric."[26] This claim can be refuted in two

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[22] Ibid., p. 5.

[23] Ibid., p. 50.

[24] Ibid., pp. 43-4.

[25] Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Philosophy and of Philosophy to Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LII (1966), p. 42.

[26] Ibid.

ways. First, philosophy is by most accounts a humanistic study. The philosopher "philosophizes" so that he may make improvements upon the social order. His conclusions are utterly worthless unless others learn about them and attempt to apply them. So to claim that philosophy, so firmly grounded in and owing to society, has no need for rhetoric is an incensingly chauvinistic statement, unless the philosopher speaks only in caves to muses. And, if that were true, the philosopher could not have become a philosopher in the first place. His work centers in man, his materials come from the study of man. In this way alone his work is rhetorical. But there is a second way in which we can consider the philosopher a rhetorician. Even if he does make no attempt to apply his conclusions to other men, he has arrived at those conclusions through the inner dialectic of symbolic action. At the very least, he practices intrapersonal rhetoric. Intrapersonal rhetoric is necessary for reflective thought, and I doubt that even Johnstone would argue that the philosopher does not practice reflective thought. In like fashion we can also name the conclusions of all other social scientists and natural scientists as rhetorical.

To this point, the examples of rhetoric we have considered have been verbal ones. The rhetor was either using symbols to influence himself or others, consciously or subconsciously. Now we come to the realm of the non-verbal. In the chapter on language I argued that man draws meaning from the non-verbal world of "reality" only through language. Thus, non-verbal communication may be considered verbal communication once-removed. The "sender," to use a familiar pigeon-holing term, may consciously or sub-consciously "transmit" non-verbal messages to which he himself attaches "verbal" meanings. Likewise, the "receiver" must

attach symbols to non-verbal cues if he is to draw any meaning from them. Burke makes the point in much the same way: "For non-verbal conditions or objects can be considered as signs by reason of the persuasive ingredients inherent in the 'meaning' they have for the audience to which they are 'addressed.'"[27] So, we may consider non-verbal rhetorical efforts in much the same way that we consider verbal ones--with the exception that we never can be quite as sure of the meanings the sender and receiver attach to the cues: we never hear clues to those meanings. Johnstone provides an example--dealing with another at pistol point. This act has rhetorical elements in it because of the linguistic meanings attached to "guns." Such a non-verbal act can be considered rhetorically only because man is grounded in his language. In the words of Johnstone, "the threat is a form of persuasion, albeit a degenerate form, and could not be applied to a mere animal."[28]

The preceding pages have provided a skeletal outline of the elements and operations contained within the scope of rhetoric, whether we consider it verbal or non-verbal, conscious or subconscious, interpersonal or intrapersonal. Included within its range are not only the conclusions and advocated positions of social and natural scientists, social analysts, and social critics, but also such operations as magic and witchcraft, the latter two being means of promoting social cohesion in more primitive societies.[29] As Walter Fisher maintains, "There would

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[27]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 161.

[28]Johnstone, "The Relevance of Rhetoric to Philosophy," p. 45.

[29]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, pp. 40-3.

appear to be as many different functions of rhetorical communication as there are ways of affecting the existence and vitality of the values that are the subject of public discourse."[30] The difference between the range of this rhetoric and the more traditional theory is rather neatly summarized by Simons:

> The new rhetoric owes its impetus to what has familiarly become referred to as the "communications boom," dating from the late forties, a period partially marked by two complementary trends: (1) Among those concerned with the causes and amelioration of man's problems, psycho-social concepts have been reformulated to reflect greater sensitivity to the influence of communication patterns on thought and action; and (2) Whereas earlier efforts among those previously interested in rhetorical discourse had focused on the platform speaker, the attention of some of them has shifted since the forties to the communicator, a "speaker-listener" who reciprocally interacts with others, usually in informal settings.[31]

THE COMPONENTS OF THE RHETORICAL ACT

Kenneth Burke's dramatistic model of human behavior is made up of five elements--act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose--which were discussed at some length in chapters two through five. These elements form the basis for the components of the rhetorical act, for all five are involved in one way or another in any rhetorical effort. Act represents the totality of the rhetorical thrust; the scene provides the background out of which the felt need for rhetoric develops; scene and purpose combine to suggest the direction that the act will take; agent and

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[30]Walter R. Fisher, "A Motive View of Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVI (1970), p. 132.

[31]Herbert W. Simons, "Toward a New Rhetoric," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 53.

agency combine to fashion the peculiarly appropriate symbolic response to the felt need; and so on. In these various combinations, or ratios as Burke calls them, the elements of the pentad work together to produce the rhetorical act. Wilkerson is talking of much the same thing when he tries to explain how the interactionist bent provides a different perspective than an earlier theory:

> This formulation then locates the specific impetus to rhetorical activity within the perceptual orientation of the speaker, but the impetus is related to the influence of external factors. The latter include all the parts of the situation noted by Bitzer--exigence (prior events), audience, and constraints--but the account emphasizes that it is the speaker's perception of these which gives rise to any rhetorical features his message may contain.[32]

The remainder of this chapter will emphasize some of the specific components of the rhetorical act implied by the symbolic interactionists' position. The next chapter will consider purpose, agent, and agency in a broader sense through an investigation of the role of rhetoric in social change and social order.

The interdependence of act and scene in rhetorical efforts provides us with several implications for a theory of rhetoric. The importance of "address" has already been established. Burke argues that an "act of persuasion is affected by the character of the scene in which it takes place and of the agents to whom it is addressed."[33] The act which is addressed must take into account the scene the actor perceives and the audience to which the appeal is being made. In no other way can the

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[32]Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," p. 92.

[33]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 62.

hoped for identifications be achieved.

The need for the rhetor to handle all of these elements in order to produce a single rhetorical act brings thought to a point of central importance. The rhetor must plan strategies based upon his understanding of his purpose and the nature of the audience. Take away the strategies, which rely upon thought processes, and the heart of rhetoric has been removed. Wilkerson goes so far as to suggest that if all communication were spontaneous (not requiring or allowing the internal dialogue which works out such strategies) there would never have been a basis for the development of rhetoric.[34]

Traditionally, the concept of audience has been of critical importance to the rhetorician. Its importance is not dulled, but rather is heightened by the new rhetoric. As we have noticed before, the symbolic interactionists' position requires that the speaker "become" his own audience momentarily. In this theory the interaction between speaker and audience is assumed to be at an extremely high level. Burke indicates that the nature of this interaction is such that the speaker must be willing to meet certain of the audience's identification needs in order to get them to meet some of his:

> . . . the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. Some of their opinions are needed to support the fulcrum by which he would move their opinions.[35]

The rhetorician must always be aware that each agent or group of agents in his audience are individual interpreters of reality. Each has learned

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[34]Wilkerson, "On Evaluating Theories of Rhetoric," p. 90.

[35]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 56.

to interpret reality in the way that both serves him best and makes the most sense (makes for "order" in his world). Put another way, all of these agents will have developed vocabularies

> that will be faithful reflections of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are selections of reality. Any any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a deflection of reality.[36]

These vocabularies become terministic screens. Therefore, the rhetor must attempt to "feel" his way into the vocabularies of his auditors if he is to hope to achieve his goals with them. To fail to do so would ultimately result in misunderstanding and rejection of his ideas. Burke comments: "You can persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his."[37] In the Grammar of Motives he strongly implies that the critic's job involves finding the representative anecdote which will "stand for" the essence of the piece of discourse he is investigating. In much the same way, it would seem that the rhetorician must search for the "anecdote" which is representative of his audience, for the anecdote is considered as a key to the vocabulary which grows from it.

What we are really searching for in looking for this anecdote is the system of motives which our auditors have chosen as the bases for their actions. Once we have discovered what we believe to be that basic

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[36]Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1969), p. 59.

[37]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 55.

system of motives, we can expand the analysis of the audience outward:

> In any term we can posit a world, in the sense that we can treat the world in terms of it, seeing all as emanations, near or far, of its light. Such reduction to a simplicity being technically reduction to a summarizing title or "God term," when we confront a simplicity we must forthwith ask ourselves what complexities are subsumed beneath it.[38]

Further, looking at the audience in terms of a representative anecdote makes the task of carrying on the internal dialogue of the "I" and the "me" a more meaningful operation. Herein lies a critical difference between the audience analysis of the traditional theory of rhetoric and the "audience analysis" of the new rhetoric: the theory of the old rhetoric asks us to find out certain features of the audience and fashion the message after those features; the new rhetoric asks us to find the basic motives of the audience, momentarily take those motives as our own, and "act out" the interaction of our appeal and those motives. Using, atypically, a Freudian vocabulary Burke lends support to this treatment of the internal dialog: "The ego with its id confronts the super-ego much as an orator would confront a somewhat alien audience, whose susceptibilities he must flatter as a necessary step towards persuasion."[39]

As the rhetorical exchanges between "speakers" and "audiences" increase the importance of more fully understanding the "other's" point of view, so does the concept of argument shift from the rather heavy emphasis upon "logical argument" in traditional rhetoric to "psychological argument" in the newer theory. The ideational basis for rhetorical activity, then, becomes an active intermeshing of what have traditionally been

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[38]Burke, Grammar of Motives, p. 105.

[39]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, pp. 37-8.

termed "logic" and "imagination." The symbolic interactionists' theory, then, tends to reverse what Donald Salper views as a lacking of traditional theory: " . . . rhetoric and poetic seem to be following separate and distinct paths that diverge from one another at an increasing rate."[40] Charles Sears Baldwin places the origin of this dividing of rhetoric and poetic firmly in classical writings:

> The movement of the one /rhetoric/ the ancients saw as primarily intellectual, a progress from idea to idea determined logically; that of the other /poetic/, as primarily imaginative, a progress from image to image determined emotionally.[41]

Following this traditional format, in Salper's words, has resulted in "a lamentable lack of balance in the practice and teaching of rhetoric"[42] so far as the integration of the rational and the imaginative are concerned.

Many writers have, in recent years, begun to challenge the assumption that rhetoric, or even argumentation, need be grounded firmly in the traditional system of logic.[43] Campbell draws attention to the weakness of the traditional view, insisting that it prevents students of rhetoric from viewing objectively many of the various persuasive uses of language:

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[40]Donald Salper, "The Imaginative Component of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LI (1965), p. 309.

[41]Charles Sears Baldwin, Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 3.

[42]Salper, "Imaginative Component of Rhetoric," p. 308.

[43]See, for example, Ray Anderson and C. David Mortensen, "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LIII (1967), pp. 143-51, and Jesse G. Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVI (1970), pp. 140-48.

> The primary objection to the rationalistic interpretation of human persuadability is that, by its very nature, it cannot provide a basis from which to scrutinize all persuasive uses of language; it cannot generate a complete theory of the rhetorical dimensions of language usage. . . . Critics and theorists who adopt the rationalistic perspective are led invariably to denigrate or ignore those genres of discourse seeking acquiesence primarily through means other than appeals to reason.[44]

Substituted for this perceived over-reliance upon the purely logical uses of language, Otis Walter says, is the logical security contemporary rhetoric finds "in amplification--endless examples, authorities, statistics, and analogies."[45] Salper characterizes those who seek to expand the role of what has traditionally been called "poetic" in rhetoric, to "justify a fuller role for the imaginative within rhetoric." Consider, for example, Weaver's claim about the metaphor: " . . . metaphor is itself a means of discovery."[46] Salper draws much the same conclusion regarding the figurative analogy, noting that "The very point of figurative analogy is that it observes similarities between otherwise dissimilar things."[47]

At the base of this belief we can find the symbolic interactionists' view of the operation of human thought, mediated through language. Each individual develops his own thought processes, his own "psych- and/or socio-logical" patterns of thought. Reality and truth can be judged

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[44]Campbell, "Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," p. 98.

[45]Otis M. Walter, "On Views of Rhetoric, Whether Conservative or Progressive," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings, ed. Richard L. Johannesen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 25.

[46]Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regnery & Company, 1953), pp. 203-4.

[47]Salper, "Imaginative Component," p. 309.

only in terms of the way that a given individual perceives them. Reality, remember, is mediated through language. Language is, in a sense, each person's own "reality." Thus, if an individual has come to think largely through analogy or metaphor, so be it. If he often makes "emotional" responses that seem "illogical" to a "logician" he is, nonetheless, operating within his own system of "logic." Most recent writers have, at the base of their attempts to expand the scope of argumentation, a belief that people simply do not think and argue in a fashion that "fits" or "is patterned after" the classical forms of logic or the more modern attempts to establish alternate forms. Fortunately, individuals develop their thought processes through interaction with those around them so in the end the individual patterns of thought are similar enough that communication between persons can take place. But the basic point is clear: what may appear "logical" to one person may be pure nonsense to another. When one person makes the fantastic logical leaps often associated with analogical reasoning another may think him slightly imbalanced. But to the symbolic interactionist, the other should not be so quick to judge--he should attempt to "get inside" the other, to take his role, and find out how the other person's thought processes work.

Thus, a symbolic interaction based rhetoric expands the scope of logic beyond the purely "mathematical" relationships among parts of speech and semantic meanings. The newer point of view allows each individual's psychological processes to alter the more formal mathematical relationships. In this way, the nature of "logic" becomes "psycho-logic" or "socio-logic" and we can concomitantly expand the ideational aspect of rhetoric to include the imaginative. A pragmatic outlook practically

requires that we expand our view of idea past the more idealistic forms used in traditional rhetoric.

CONCLUSION

Almost by definition, a pragmatically based rhetoric expands the scope of rhetoric to any use of symbols that contributes to the social order. So considered, rhetoric includes not only speaker-audience interaction but also interpersonal and intrapersonal messages. In each of these three forms of communication, participants plan strategies to achieve certain goals. Each participant, to one extent or another, attempts to "take the role" of the other participants and internally rehearse the various means of achieving his goal in a given situation. Though this statement may imply total consciousness of action, the symbolic interactionists recognize a "sub-conscious" application of rhetorical motives--motives that have become so ingrained through past conscious use that they are now basically habitual.

The symbolic interactionist, further, recognizes each individual as a separate locus of motives and a separate interpreter of reality. Thus, for effective communication to take place--and for any rhetor to have hopes of achieving his goals--each participant in a given rhetorical act must attempt to locate the system of motives active in the members of his "audience." After finding this sytem of motives, the rhetor has a far greater chance of drawing the desired identifications between his own motives and those of the persons with whom he is speaking. Also growing out of this recognition of individuals as separate loci of motives and interpreters of reality is a broader based "logic," one which meshes the "traditionally" logical with the traditionally "poetic." The logical

has generally been considered as the ideational aspect of rhetoric. This expanded concept of "the logical" thus brings the imaginative within the ideational bases of rhetoric, allowing the student of the field to consider a much broader range of the thought processes that make up the rhetorical act.

Put simply, then, a rhetoric based in symbolic interaction extends the boundaries of rhetoric far beyond those generally recognized in more traditional theories of rhetoric. This broader scope enables, for example, the rhetorical critic to join forces with the sociologist and investigate non-oratorical forms of address in terms of their social impact; it re-makes the rhetorical critic into a social critic. For, as we investigate the ways in which individuals expand their social identifications with other individuals, we are investigating the ways in which the social order forms and is changed.

Chapter 8

IDENTIFICATION AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Hugh Duncan writes that the "social end of all communication is the consensus that is reached through the establishment and maintenance of attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge, as these are expressed in roles whose successful performance guarantees social order."[1] Since the symbolic interactionists, from whom the rhetorical stance of this study is being taken, are primarily interested in the ways in which society operates, it is imperative that the new rhetoric be examined in terms of its social force. Basically, I shall maintain in this chapter that identification, the key term in the new rhetoric, provides the primary link among persons that leads to renewed attempts at maintaining some form of social order. Further, I shall relate this to the ways in which division attempts to "tear at" the fibre of social order, causing society to "regroup" and establish a new order.

My basic concern is both with the ways in which rhetoric works to establish and change social goals, and with the mechanics involved in maintaining social order. As Duncan claims, a theory of rhetoric will be of no real value "unless it can be applied to the affairs of men in society."[2] Symbolic action will be examined insofar as it is used in

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[1]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, "The Search for a Social Theory of Communication in American Sociology," Human Communication Theory, ed. Frank E. X. Dance (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 240.

[2]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 172.

acts of "identification with good, dubious, or bad principles of social order."[3] It is here--in the social battles involving order and disorder, "between good and bad principles of social order as personified in heroes and villains, Gods and devils . . ."--that symbols reach into their most important realm.[4]

IDENTIFICATION AND DIVISION: THE BACKDROP FOR ORDER

At the base of all human motivation in social circumstances lies a goal of interpersonal identification. The writings of both Burke and Duncan are rich with this implication. Though man may have other specific motives in any given symbolic act, somewhere within his action he is seeking to reaffirm the nature of his relationship with other men.

At the most personal level, we all develop certain parts of our individual personalities through identification with family, nation, political ties, cultural surroundings, church--those social institutions and those persons closest and most important to us.[5] The very nature of identification suggests that this is so: "In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains a unique, individual locus of motives."[6] We are all, then, "substantially one" with the significant others who have had a shaping influence upon our lives; and at the same time we remain

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[3]Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 22.

[4]Ibid., p. 23.

[5]Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 301.

[6]Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 21.

different in many ways than each other person, no matter how close he may be.

Leadership in a society emerges only when some powerful person or persons manage to cast an image with which a significant portion of the public can feel "substantially one." Lacking this sort of identification with the public, a "leader" cannot lead. Duncan argues that because social action is dramatistic, in that all persons can become active in making rules and appointing leaders, the massed individuals have the final say in determining the courses a leader may follow and in deciding which leader will follow such courses.

> All legitimation of power rests, in the last analysis, on the acceptance of a style of life. We may usurp power through force, but we secure victory only when the vanquished admire, honor, and finally, imitate our way of life. . . . The people do not want information about, but identification with, community life.[7]

In this way, people "choose up sides," identifying with certain leaders and rejecting certain others as unfit because they are "too unlike." Further, as individuals move from one issue to the next they may gather forces behind different leaders. Identification, as we have argued, is not total. While I may be "substantially the same" as one leader on one particular social issue I may also be quite different from him on another issue. Thus, my allegiance will be split among a number of various leaders at any given time. The doctrine of substance, then, implies both identification and division. A society based upon such a notion is more than an "aggregate of people." It is an aggregate of people, divided in many ways, who are unified by some quite abstract goal or ideal.[8] Put

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[7]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 34.

[8]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 86.

another way, each of us identifies with certain "specialized activities" which are in some way divergent from other such activities. Society is formed out of these activities which participate in "a larger unit of action. 'Identification' is a word for the autonomous activity's place in this wider context . . ."[9] Burke explains this base for social cohesion in another way:

> As regards "autonomous" activities, the principle of Rhetorical identification may be summed up thus: The fact that an activity is capable of reduction to intrinsic, autonomous principles does not argue that it is free from identification with other orders of motivation extrinsic to it. Such other orders are extrinsic to it, as considered from the standpoint of the specialized activity alone. But they are not extrinsic to the field of moral action as such, considered from the standpoint of human activity in general.[10]

In this way, different movements led by different leaders may be apparently at odds but be consubstantial when "reduced" to a broader motive. Thus, both the conservative "patriot" and the anti-war "patriot" engaged in "battle" for the past few years have been concerned with what each considered the "best image" for the country to put forth. Substantially different on one level, these two movements have been "substantially alike" at another level--though they have seldom been willing to acknowledge the latter.

In short, identification between persons is never complete. They may agree on one idea, but disagree on many others. They may have nearly identical feelings toward a third person, but feel differently about a fourth. As Burke says, "In pure identification there would be no strife."

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[9]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 27.

[10]Ibid.

But since there is no "pure" identification, strife is ever-present in human interaction. And it is out of this strife that rhetoric develops. In Burke's words, "since opponents can join in battle only through a mediatory ground that makes their communication possible. . ." there must be neither absolute identification nor absolute division. "But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric."[11]

Division is the counterpart of identification. It is impossible to clearly define one in the absence of the other. Fogarty relates the two in the field of human interaction by noting that "it is division and partisanship that provide the situations where identification becomes a human need."[12] Identification, the primary rhetorical motive, arises in human affairs seeking solutions to the problems posed by division. As we have previously "named" rhetoric a problem-solving activity, such a problem-solution relationship between division and identification is quite appropriate. Burke claims "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity."[13]

Division is confronted in rhetoric through what Burke calls the two main aspects of rhetoric: "Its use of identification and its nature

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[11]Ibid., p. 25.

[12]Daniel Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 75.

[13]Burke, Rhetoric of Motives, p. 22.

as addressed."[14] Thus social action in pursuit of the social order is grounded in the interplay of the forces of identification and the forces for division. Duncan provides the commentary for Burke's "battle."

> Thus, Burke begins his system with acting (that is, communicating) individuals who are at odds with one another and who become identified with groups "more or less at odds with one another." He seeks ways in which to confront the implications of division, not to explain them away, or to disregard them, or to reduce them to an "abnormal" condition of loving cooperation.[15]

"INTERLOCKING MOMENTS" AND THE DRAMA OF MAINTAINING SOCIAL ORDER

According to Duncan, Burke posits four basic motives in human communication: guilt, redemption, hierarchy, and victimage. "By this, he means that in human relationships these four motives are the keys to the grand design of all human motivation."[16] To these four basic motives he adds three more elements making up what Burke calls the "interlocking moments:" the negative, mortification, and catharsis. Rueckert explains how these seven "terms" inter-lock in human action to create a drama of human relations:

> they are "interlocked" because all of them belong to the "Order" or "Covenant" cluster of terms and any one of them "logologically" implies all the others. Briefly, the seven moments are related to each other in the following way: the whole drama is made possible--or inevitable--by language, which introduces the negative into human experience; with language

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[14] Ibid., p. 45.

[15] Duncan, Communication and Social Order, p. 159.

[16] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, "Introduction," Permanence and Change, au. Kenneth Burke (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), xxxi.

> and the negative man creates various kinds of hierarchic orders, all of which have hundreds of "thou-shalt-nots" in them; every hierarchy is experienced by a man as a kind of covenant, but no man is capable of meeting all the terms of the agreement and in some way he will fail or disobey. Failure and disobedience--the "fall"--cause guilt, which in turn makes necessary the whole machinery of catharsis. The two principle means of purification are mortification and victimage; and the end result of both is redemption, or the alleviation of guilt.[17]

Social order can be found, basically, in the hierarchies which man establishes and which he attempts to uphold. In search of these covenants man falls, producing guilt. Failure to live up to the old social order demands that the guilt be purged. After redemption is achieved man establishes new hierarchies which make up a new "social order" for him. And so the cycle goes on without end. Out of the relationships among these seven "moments" arises all of the give-and-take of social interaction, and out of these relationships grow the terms which must be used in an analysis of social action in pursuit of social order.

Hierarchy is perhaps the most important of these seven "moments," particularly in a discussion of social order. Each individual sets his own hierarchies by ordering his goals in social interaction. Social order and societal goals evolve from these individual hierarchies when enough members of a "culture" advocate similar goal systems. Hierarchy itself, claims Fogarty, refers to "the overall pattern of . . . constant and universal strivings after identification."[18] Social hierarchies are, as interpreted by Rueckert, filled with "movement and rest, flux and

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[17]William H. Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 131.

[18]Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric, p. 76.

fixity, division and merger . . ."[19] in that man is constantly rearranging hierarchies.

Change is inherent is a society's chosen "ordering of priorities," because man consistently fails to fulfill the hierarchies he has established--identification never reaches perfection in the realm of human affairs. And, failure to live up to the rules established in attempting to fulfill any covenant (hierarchy) fills man with guilt which he must purge. Rueckert, in a long statement here included because of its explanatory value, maintains that the hierarchy is

> equivalent to the "covenant." The pre-existing orders tell man what he should and should not do and be: they provide him with his ideals (economic, sexual, social, familial, intellectual) and with a number of alternative selves from which to choose; they offer a complete set of values in terms of which he can find himself, measure success and failure, goodness and evil. The first or original "temptation" and "fall" are automatic; that is, they are inherent in man's nature as a symbol-using animal, for language, which has imbedded in it a driving impulse towards abstraction, enables man to construct ideal selves and ideal modes of behavior which are never capable of attainment, but on the basis of which he nevertheless judges himself and others.[20]

Duncan maintains that there are five basic types of hierarchies to which man pays homage:

> There are ultimates of the person, as when the personal authority of parents, prophets, or gods is invoked; of laws and codes, as when we say that "laws, not men, uphold social order"; of nature and environment, as when we ascribe causes of order to "tendencies," "processes," or "laws" in nature; of means, as when we turn to methods, techniques, instruments, or magic; and, finally,

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[19]Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations, p. 140.

[20]Ibid., pp. 132-3.

> of the perfected end or ideal of social order whose immanence infuses social relationships with meaning.[21]

Faced with covenants with each of these forms of "ultimates," the individual must "pyramid" those ideals to which he pays homage. Without such a "rank-ordering" of "priorities" a person would not long remain sane; if you answer to five masters and each of them passes out different orders at the same instant how can you possibly respond?

However, if one person is to interact effectively with others who may not have constructed the same hierarchic "gods" he must retain a feeling for the other person's covenants and he must remain flexible enough to openly discuss the other's goals. Only if such flexibility is present can one's hierarchies change and "grow" in response to changes in others around him. On the other hand, "when the enactment of hierarchy becomes so dogmatic and the stages of development so rigid that doubt, question, or creation of new hierarchies are no longer possible . . . we enter the realm of hierarchal psychosis."[22] We become so attached to single "god-terms" that we cannot operate without them. And, viewed from the other perspective, when a society becomes "set in its ways" with laws that many consider to be archaic it, too, suffers from hierarchal psychosis. Typically, a person or society bestruck with such a "social disease" finds itself in trouble for it becomes bent upon enforcing a law, value, or whatever to which others no longer pay allegiance. The person who attempts to enforce such "outdated" covenants upon others becomes frustrated; the society which attempts it opens itself to revolt.

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[21]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 115.

[22]Duncan, Communication and Social Order, p. 132.

One of the particular types of hierarchy noted by Duncan is the "ultimate of the person." It is singled out for special attention here because of the symbolic interactionists' primary concern with interaction among persons. Person hierarchies are characterized by something akin to (though enforced somewhat less rigidly than) India's "besmirched-by-the-history-books" caste system wherein persons exist on different levels of social position and influence. Particularly in the case of government, some few individuals hold great quantities of power, others hold some power but not as much, and others (by far the larger number) are relatively powerless. Rhetoric conducted in such a setting is a delicate operation, for persons on different power and status levels must attempt to promote identification with persons on other levels--and the latter may not be interested in the appeals of the former.

Courtship is the form that rhetoric takes in such person hierarchies. In courtship, "we plead with superiors, inferiors, and equals as a speaker pleads with his audience. In such courtship the response of the audience is given, never taken."[23] The superior must persuade the inferior to trust in him and accept his rule. According to Duncan, "This is done through the glorification of symbols of majesty and power as symbols of social order . . . wherein the power and the glory of the ruler . . . /is/ a 'representative' of some transcendent principle of order . . ."[24] Inferiors, on the other hand, "must persuade superiors to accept them as loyal followers, but in doing so they must subordinate themselves to principles of order, as well as to the personal will of their superiors."[25]

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[23]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 127.

[24]Ibid., p. 53.

[25]Ibid.

And the granting of wishes by either the superior or the inferior is never to be assumed.

> Courtship, sexual or social, brings us immediately into the realm of persuasion. We cannot "make" or force the other to give us honor, reputation, love, or hate. We cannot even make him attend to us, unless he wants to.[26]

In fact, the actors in this drama "keep a wary eye on each other to guard against threats to the glory of principles of social order . . ."[27] as each of them views it.

Hierarchy, then, represents the complex social allegiances that each individual draws up for himself. The hierarchy each person forms determines many of his social actions in that it provides an ordering of his goals and motives. The actor makes a covenant with those things he values and he strives to accomplish them. But when he fails to achieve one or more of them, "hierarchic embarrasment" sets in--he feels guilt.

According to Duncan, "Guilt arises out of negation of the principles of social order, and their expression in hierarchy. We believe we should be identifying with such a principle, but we are not."[28] These moments of guilt are times of deep social disrelationship. Such guilt can work in two ways. First, each of us may "feel" our own guilt because we fail to identify with major social covenants (or, because we fail to strive hard enough in their behalf). Or, alternatively, we may imbue others with guilt because we observe their actions as being contrary to the

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[26]Duncan, Communication and Social Order, p. 196.

[27]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 54.

[28]Duncan, Communication and Social Order, p. 121.

principles of social order. In this way, due to severe societal stereotypes, "Jews, Negroes, and minority groups are branded as evil before they act at all."[29]

Guilt is purgatory--it is only a stopping place in a continuing journey. And just as division and identification are "pair terms," so does guilt imply redemption. Redemption revitalizes us, sets us in a renewed position of social grace so that we may make new covenants by establishing new hierarchies. Redemption is accomplished by a process involving, usually, both mortification and victimage.

Mortification, the first step towards redemption, is basically a means of readying oneself for the purge. It is during the period of mortification that the individual internalizes and intensely contemplates his seeming violations of the social order. At base, it is an internally oriented phenomenon. Duncan clearly places it inside the individual:

> . . . penance, or abstinence, or the self-punishment of mortification, do not occur merely when we are "frustrated" by some external interference. Frustration must come from within. When we accept commandments of authority as our duty, we kill within us motives we think unruly or impious.[30]

But in addition to placing mortification inside the individual, Duncan also seems to be saying that it can be a full means of redemption in itself. If we can accept the wrongness of an act we have basically repledged allegiance to the social order and we feel pardoned. And, indeed, mortification can serve to assuage guilt by itself. But this involves the cracking of some often strong ego-defenses. Because of this

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[29] Ibid., p. 122.

[30] Ibid., p. 395.

mortification is more often a first step towards redemption, closely followed by victimization. Duncan continues:

> We seek to overcome the deep pain of inner contention by projecting it upon a scapegoat . . . who becomes the sacrificial vessel upon which we vent, as if from without, a turmoil that is actually within. When we cannot do this, the body itself may be victimized, as in psychogenic illness: our socially goaded entanglements literally tear us to pieces as we suffer from "stress" diseases.[31]

Viewed this way, mortification may be a two-step process in which we assign guilt not to ourselves, but to another person. In this way, the second step is a form of victimization. But the whole process may be kept internal. The implication of Duncan's latter statement is that we often "conjure up visions" of another person and "internally" place the blame on him.

But purely external victimization can follow from mortification. Again, Duncan makes the tie for us:

> Victims exist within the self, as well as in society. But for the purposes of constructing a model of human relationships based on communication, the "inner victims," the inner selves whom we punish and mortify in various ways, may be considered as re-enactments of "outer" or social selves. Where there are "total" victims available to us, we turn inward only to marshal our strength against a known enemy. We turn inward to prepare for outward action, not to stay within the self in reverie or fantasy.[32]

When we do turn outward for release from guilt we search for the perfect "sacrificial lamb." We can begin to understand how victimage assigns blame to others when the social order is disrupted by turning to a particularly cogent statement of Duncan:

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[31] Ibid., p. 396.

[32] Duncan, Symbols in Society, pp. 147-48.

> Burke argues that such absolution is "contrived through victimage." This involves the "choice of a sacrificial offering that is correspondingly absolute in the perfection of its fitness." . . . Victimage is the means by which we cleanse the group of tribal or "inherited" guilt. . . . The sacrifice of the virtually perfect victim, in so far as it affects social order, can then be thought of as a kind of purge. The victim, of course, must be prepared for his ritual role, for only a powerful victim can effectively purge the community of great evil.[33]

The social observer can continually see victimage operating at all levels of social interaction. The schoolboy who spills his ink has violated the "social order" of the classroom. How often he is quick to point an accusing finger at a classmate saying that a paper wad "let fly" by the second boy made him jump and knock the ink off the desk (onto the teacher's shoes!). If the scapegoat he has chosen is a worthy victim (as with the "hellion" of the second grade), his guilt is purged and he once again takes his rightful position in the social order.

Or, we can view victimage in operation on the larger social scene as with student dissenters and administration officials doing verbal battle over the Indochina war. There was no doubt that social disorder had replaced social order on the national scene in the late 1960's and very early 1970's. But who had broken the covenant? The administration, often through the "pithies and pungents" of the Vice-President, looked upon the disorder as a direct result of the "rabble-rousing" dissenters and the "effete snobs" who spurred them on. The dissenters, on the other hand, pointed a finger of blame at the "war machine" administration claiming that the governmental actions had brought on disorder. Each,

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[33]Duncan, Communication and Social Order, p. 125.

to the satisfaction of itself, managed to alleviate guilt feelings by victimizing the other. And in this way, each could go on pursuing the hierarchical arrangements to which it had pledged allegiance.

So, we have come full cycle. Men establish hierarchies which they pursue as covenants. Inevitably, the covenants are broken and guilt feelings set in. As guilt is a fall from grace, an attempt is begun to redeem oneself and re-join the social order. Identification, as man's primary social motive, essentializes this attempt. Through mortification and victimage man gains redemption and chooses new covenants. And the cycle repeats itself again and again, each time re-adjusting the hierarchies that the individuals and the society they represent choose to honor.

ORDER, DISORDER, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Social order is based in the hierarchic constructions that the members of a society have chosen. The total social order is made up of man's allegiance to persons, laws, nature, means, and a cultural ideal. The simplicity of these statements belies the complexity of social order in any cultural setting, though. All of man's perceptions are mediated through his language. Each individual may have slightly different concepts of what given words in a language mean. Further, in any cultural setting there are masses of individuals who place these differing constructions and interpretations on the events around them and the goals that they strive to achieve. In short, the presence of any sort of social order can hardly be accounted for by chance. Out of the wide variety of social constructions in a culture some means must emerge to form order. The mutual benefit of the members of a society

argues for the establishment of order, and the motive of identification for mutual benefit urges the society to become "substantially one" on at least the issues most important for the society's existence and growth. In short, as Marie Nichols says, "we have in a society whose direction is co-operation, people who are apart. Different nervous systems, through language and the ways of production, erect various communities of interests and insights, social communities varying in nature and scope."[34]

Order develops out of the divergence found in individual members of a culture through three primary forces: language, leadership, and rules. Overriding all three of these forces, of course, is man's means of social address--rhetoric. According to Fogarty,

> man pours all his energies into establishing and maintaining his personal world of hierarchic order. His survival depends on it. And rhetoric is his specific means of seeking or keeping that order. . . . Rhetoric, then, is the instrument of strife, because it is the means of defending and competing for this order. But it is also the means of accomplishing order, because, for Burke, entreaty, overture, politeness, and diplomacy are all forms of a rhetoric of courtship that promotes union for the sake of order.[35]

The language of a culture will determine, to a large extent, the specific form its social order will take. As Duncan explains the function of language in establishing social order, "Symbolic integration is achieved through naming. . . . A style of life, like any style, is an expression through symbols of appropriate and inappropriate ways of acting. These 'ways' are carried out under names which are . . . goads

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[34]Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism, p. 82.

[35]Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric, p. 56.

to action."[36] In a society, such as ours, which sees the communist as "enemy" to order, "Those whose acts are named 'communistic' must be killed by those whose acts are named 'democractic.' What is a 'communist' or a 'democrat'? . . . They are simply god and devil terms . . ."[37] And, if we are to maintain the social order we have pledged ourselves to the devils must be exorcised and the gods lauded.

Such is the nature of language as a force for hierarchy. But language sets up a wall between man and the environment and our terministic screens may lead to witch hunts in a community of innocents. Hierarchic psychosis can so focus attention on the covenant, and a society's screens can so fog actions that are only mildly divergent that we may forever be looking under beds and in attics in the style of the McCarthy communist purge of the fifties or the "detention camps" of the war years. Thus, while language provides a means for forming the social order, it also has the force, through its inherent ambiguity, to so tie us to a covenant that we feel threatned by anyone who does not "bow thrice upon entering."

Further, social order is enforced and, to a large extent, shaped upon the advice of a culture's leaders. "The basic sociological question in the analysis of any social drama is: How is the principle of social order represented? . . . Who is the hero, and who is the villain, of social order . . ."[38] Because of the possible (or probable) mass confusion and disorder that could result if no one attempted to bring together the hierarchies of the individuals in a society, we can create social order

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[36]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 21.

[37]Ibid., p. 23.

[38]Ibid., p. 92.

and sustain it only through a distribution of authority.[39] Indeed, in a way,

> Order in society comes from resolving conflicting claims to power. There are three basic modes of adjustment to those who seek to legitimize their power over us in the name of some principle of social order. We may accept their commandments as our duty; we may doubt their commandments, in the hope that in doubt and inquiry we can overcome incongruity; or we may reject them.[40]

In each case the social order is built, for even in rejecting one leader's claims we by implication accept another's.

But, just as language could operate against the best interests of the community, so can a leader become overzealous in pursuit of the "Social Order" and bring division to the surface. Much of comedy is a chiding of the excesses to which principles of order can be taken. When leaders attempt too-strict enforcement of their view of order, part of the community comes to see them in an almost comic light. And though we may laugh at the comic, we seldom entrust him with the substantial decisions involved in moving a society forward. Further, as part of the community sees the leader being over-zealous, another part will see him as an apt leader leading us on a path toward righteous principles. And when the two forces eventually come in conflict only disorder can result. Thus the leader who pursues the covenant to the point of psychosis may end up destroying the principle he was hoping to protect.

The third major element contributing to the social order is the "rule." It is only through rules, formal or informal, that we manage to create and sustain a social order. Without them, there would be no

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[39]Duncan, Communication and Social Order, pp. 112-13.

[40]Duncan, Symbols in Society, pp. 61-2.

guidelines to recommend or limit action. Further, rules are made subject to agreement (again, formal or informal) by the members of a society and without such agreement among persons social order could not prevail.[41]

Previously we have considered the relationships between superiors and inferiors; through the concept of rule we come upon the relationships among equals in a social order. The rules of a society apply equally, in theory, to all its members. The rulers may frame the laws, but once the laws are accepted by the populous they apply equally to the ruler and the ruled.[42] Often the social order becomes disrupted because those with power attempt to enforce rules unequally, exempting either themselves or a special interest group with whom they feel a sense of identity. Such unequal protection of the law brings forth some of the strongest forms of objection from the society, for the social order is totally dependent upon the equal application of rules. As Duncan argues, "rules and laws are powerful because we believe that all will obey rules which represent the 'consent' of the community."[43] And when it becomes clear that some can get away with disobeying the rules, all the basic assumptions that lead to social cohesion have been undermined. In Duncan's terms,

> Inferiors are obedient to the commandments of their superiors because of their belief that superiors uphold sacred principles of social order. . . . Since the power of the leader depends on the sacredness of the covenant between him and his followers, whoever breaks the covenant undermines the sacred foundations of social order.[44]

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[41] Ibid., p. 30.

[42] Ibid., p. 58.

[43] Ibid., p. 75.

[44] Ibid., p. 76.

Whenever the "mystery" of the enforcer of rules--umpire, judge, policeman, or dissertation adviser--vanishes, effective rule of law also disappears.[45]

Thus, language and leaders and rules can all play extremely important roles in the establishment and maintenance of social order. But each, in its own way, can also prove destructive of that which it seeks to promote. Language, because it is ambiguous, can allow misperceptions of the intent of persons and cause them to be branded, "incorrectly," as destroyers of order. Leaders who become psychotic in the enforcement of order can cause a general breakdown of order through a destruction of faith. And the rule itself, either because it has not received approval of the ruled or because it is prejudicially enforced, can contribute to disorder.

Disorder in a society implies that the social structure is not meeting the expectations of the people. Hence, social change to establish a re-ordered hierarchy is nearly inevitable--even if the change is a very minor one. Burke relates the need for social change to Veblen's concept of cultural lag: "In its simplest form, his doctrine is concerned with institutions which, developed as a way of adequately meeting past situations, become a menace insofar as the situation has changed."[46] But, as Duncan warns us, "Change is never easy, and, as we see in revolutions, often occurs only in open revolt."[47] Change can occur in a social order in either cooperative ways, in which all parties (or nearly all) participate in initiating and capping the change, or by way of "battle," either

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[45]Ibid., p. 91.

[46]Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 47.

[47]Duncan, Symbols in Society, p. 123.

verbal or physical. In most societies change comes as a result of not-too-intense verbal battle. Occasionally, when a truly significant issue is at stake and when verbal battle cannot resolve differences to the satisfaction of all, change occurs with open revolution. But such drastic measures are so destructive of the old order that the establishment of a new set of hierarchies may be more dissatisfying than was the old one.

Basically, disorder results from a society's failure to provide a sanctioned means of passage from one social structure to another. We have seen this operating in our society in the past two decades. Blacks, finding that the negotiating table did not bring them equal protection within the social order began protest marches, sit-in demonstrations, and other such activities which were designed to focus attention on their needs. Other groups followed suit, including war and draft protestors, women's lib advocates, and members of the gay liberation front. These protests varied in intensity from quite peaceful activities to rock-throwing debacles, but each was designed in its own way to confront the guardians of the social order in the hopes of establishing new hierarchies.

Orderly change can be and usually is achieved as a society provides "bridges from the old to the new" in its eternal quest for a better social system. Indeed, "A social structure exists in passage from old to new, as well as in fixed principles of order."[48] But there are times when the leaders prove unaccessible to the masses, as when "a hierarchy becomes so stratified that inferiors cannot talk to superiors or must talk to them only through cold and distant intermediaries," leading to a loss of faith

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[48]Ibid., p. 53.

in the sanctioned means of enforcing the covenant.[49] As Duncan puts it,

> Bureaucratic officials may become so concerned with the majesty of their command, and so insistent on "going through channels" in communication, that they finally disappear as persons and we come to think of bureaucratic consensus as an impersonal process dependent upon regulations (which somehow breed themselves), not upon the will of human beings.[50]

And, when there are no upward channels of communication, "no upward ways to transcendence, conflict can be solved only in violence."[51]

Order and disorder in society are ever-present. Order is a term for the covenants we have set and strive to honor; disorder represents our failure, either intentional or accidental, to live up to the standards set for society. Because of the constant interplay of order and disorder, change is inevitable. Change can be achieved quietly if the principles of social order are supplemented by a good system of vertical communication and by leaders who are representative of the will of the people--leaders who are willing to provide even-handed enforcement of the rules by which society wishes to live. Lacking such leaders and such a communication network, change must take place in more disruptive ways. One task of a society must always be the development of leaders who are willing to develop good communication systems. For, in the view of Duncan, "If we learn to face gaps and breakdowns in communication /by learning how to prevent them in the future/ . . . we may not need to fight."[52]

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[49] Ibid., p. 83.

[50] Ibid., p. 133.

[51] Ibid., p. 132.

[52] Ibid., p. 108.

CONCLUSION

The new rhetoric, grounded in the notion of identification, speaks directly to matters relating to the social order. In one view, it is a means of developing, maintaining, and/or changing the social order. In the title of one of Burke's books we can witness the aim of this socially grounded rhetoric: Towards a Better Life.[53] Rhetoric, through the workings of identification among equals, superiors, and inferiors, "guides" us toward the social ideal of community consubstantiality. The language we use, the leaders we choose, and the rules we form all contribute to the pursuit of the better life. But each of these can also disrupt our orderly progress by bringing disorder into society. From the writings of Kenneth Burke and Hugh Duncan we can learn much about the ways in which human interaction can either promote social order and social growth or be a disruptive force blocking their achievement. The lessons these writers teach us are surely important if our society is to continue orderly progress toward consubstantiality--they may even be essential. For these writers can help us learn from the past errors of various societies how to avoid the violent upheavals, both verbal and physical, and how to respond constructively when social disruption inevitably begins. Our concern in this chapter has been with the ways in which rhetoric can promote social order. The ideas of Burke and Duncan give us at least a good start toward understanding this role of rhetoric.

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[53]Kenneth Burke, Towards a Better Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

Chapter 9

BALANCE THEORY AS GROUNDING FOR PERSUASION THEORY AND SUPPORT FOR "IDENTIFICATION"

In the three previous chapters two basic rhetorical motives have been discussed. The larger of these motives, "identification," is the basis upon which the new rhetoric is judged to be different from and more encompassing than traditional rhetoric. And, the lesser of these motives, "persuasion,"--the key term of traditional rhetoric--is still considered to be a viable rhetorical motive in the new rhetoric. In this chapter we will examine both of these motives in light of the findings of one adjunct of symbolic interactionism, balance theory.

This approach has grown out of the claim found at several points in this study that persons operate as individual loci of motives and individual interpreters of reality. Coupled with this, in Chapter Seven, was the view that individuals develop personalized grammatical forms--a sort of "individualized" rhetorical logic. These forms are primarily responsible for guiding human thought processes. So, in this chapter we will explore, first, one specific development of these forms--balance theory. Then balance theory will be examined as a basis for the study of the persuasion motive. Finally, Kenneth Burke's notion of identification as a primary human motive will be tested against the balance theory literature.

In A Theory of Personality George Kelly posits a theory of constructive alternativism consisting of a fundamental postulate and several

corollaries. His "organization corollary" asserts that "Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs."[1] Fritz Heider began the development of a theory which suggests a specific way in which such cognitive and affective organization is carried out. His work, culminating in The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations in 1958 lays the groundwork for balance theory.[2] This theory suggests, in particular, that persons organize their thoughts and beliefs into coherent and consistent patterns. It is through these patterns that man views his world and reacts to it.

BALANCE THEORY: AN ADJUNCT TO SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

One may approach balance theory from several paths. Originally, in Heider's formulation, it was intended as a theory of personality designed to "get at" the way man views and adjusts to his perceptual world. Our concern, though, is more limited--balance theory is here being primarily considered as a critical and analytic tool, as well as a theoretical grounding, for persuasion theory. Thus, we are concerned with understanding the way man adjusts to his perceptual world in situations that allow persuasive attempts of one sort or another.

Heider's original development of balance theory concerned itself with both two and three element relationships. The three element set, or triad, was made up of "p" (perceiver), "o" (other person), and "x" (a nonpersonal entity). The relationships among elements can either be

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[1]George Kelley, A Theory of Personality (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963), p. 56.

[2]Fritz Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958).

positive (designated by a + or a solid line) or negative (designated by a - or a broken line). There are eight possible combinations of positive and negative relationships among the elements of the triad. In Heider's view, which is illustrated in Figure 1, each triad either had to be balanced or unbalanced. For him, balance exists whenever all three

Figure 1
Heider's System of Balanced and Unbalanced Triads

relations are positive or when two relations are negative. Sets are unbalanced when they contain an odd number of negative relationships.[3]

The fundamental assumption made by Heider, and by all balance theorists, is that states of balance are preferred to states of unbalance; therefore, when unbalance exists in a person's perceptual field tension is produced which generates forces to restore balance. Heider's central thought here is summarized by Rosenberg and Abelson:

> Heider's approach to this problem is based upon the principle that the sentiment (affect) characterizing one's response to a person will tend toward "balanced" relations with the sentiment

[3]This explication of the basic Heider model is drawn from Heider, Interpersonal Relations and David C. Glass, "Theories of Consistency and the Study of Personality," Handbook of Personality Theory and Research, eds. Edgar Borgatta and William Lambert (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1968), pp. 788-97.

characterizing one's response toward some object with which the person is perceived to be related.[4]

This basic Heider model stimulated a great deal of research, much of which was aimed at refining the system. Experimenters soon began to conclude that the system was too vague in its predictions to be fully useful. In one attempt to improve upon the Heider model Cartwright and Harary devised a system which allowed the basic set of relations to be expanded past three elements to basically any number of interconnected elements. Their model suggested that it was possible to assess the degree of balance in any cognitive (or affective) set by noting the number of positive and negative cycles operating within it.[5] In effect, this increased the predictive power of balance theory to include more than the basic three element relationships and it provided a system for measuring "rough" degrees of balance--somewhat more sophisticated than Heider's comparatively simple notion that triads are either balanced or unbalanced. A further refinement of the same nature was made by Morrissette. Starting with the notion of degrees of balance he devised a method for testing the tension for change that is produced by varying the degrees of balance. Specifically, he concluded that "(a) The magnitude of force toward balance is inversely related to the degree of balance of the system; (b) The magnitude of tension for change that is created by a system is inversely related to the degree of balance of

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[4]Milton J. Rosenberg and Robert P. Abelson, "An Analysis of Cognitive Balancing," Attitude Organization and Change, eds. Rosenberg, Carl Hovland, et al (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 113.

[5]Dorwin Cartwright and Frank Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," Psychological Review, 63 (September, 1956), pp. 277-93.

that system."[6] Thus, these two basic revisions of balance theory add to Heider's basic system the ability to measure degrees of balance and tension for change in the various degrees of balance and unbalance. The work of Feather[7] and Wiest[8] has further refined the predictive capacity of the basic balance model.[9]

But these models are not the ones with which I am primarily concerned. In this group only the Feather system has direct application to persuasion and it has not been sufficiently tested and developed to allow for the types of predictions that are necessary for a theory of persuasion. Rather, we should focus our attention upon the balance model set forth by Theodore Newcomb. Over a period of years Newcomb has made basic changes in the Heider model which make it more directly applicable to persuasion. In addition, he and other experimenters have refined the predictive capacity of the model to the point that, as I shall contend later in the chapter, we can draw some rather specific implications for persuasion.

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[6]Julian O. Morrissette, "An Experimental Study of the Theory of Structural Balance," Human Relations, 11 (August, 1958), p. 253. Note that this statement leaves open the possibility that some tension can exist even in a state of balance. This conclusion is specifically drawn by Newcomb, as reported later in this chapter.

[7]See N. T. Feather, "A Structural Balance Model of Communication Effects," Psychological Review, 71 (1964), pp. 291-313. This study is one of the very few that directly addresses itself to the outcome of intrapersonal communication efforts.

[8]See W. M. Wiest, "A Quantitative Extension of Heider's Theory of Cognitive Balance Applied to Interpersonal Perception and Self-Esteem," Psychological Monographs, 79 (1965), Whole No. 607.

[9]A recent study investigating the Wiest and Feather models is Rodney Wellens and Donald Thistlethwaite, "An Analysis of Two Quantitative Theories of Cognitive Balance," Psychological Review, 78 (1971), pp. 141-50.

Newcomb's revisions of balance theory can usefully be broken into two thrusts, separated in time as well as content. In the 1950's Newcomb "adapted"[10] balance, moving away from Heider's interest in cognitive formations in one person toward an orientation emphasizing communication among people.[11] In this early expansion of balance theory Newcomb described the simplest communicative act as one person transmitting information to another person about some object or event. Viewing the primary triad as a communicative relationship allows one to view the set from more than one angle, yet it allows the observer to assume a phenomenological approach as did Heider in keeping the triadic relationship housed in the mind of one of the two individuals involved in the act. Newcomb comments: "For some purposes the system may be regarded as a phenomenal one within the life space of A or B, or for other purposes as an 'objective' system including all the possible relationships as inferred from A and B's behavior."[12] The most important aspect of this early revision of balance theory, for current purposes, is that it directly relates balance theory to persuasion. The basic assumption flowing from this approach is that in a communicative situation, individuals will attempt to "maintain simultaneous orientation toward one another as communicators and toward objects of communication,"[13]

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[10]Theodore Newcomb, "An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts," Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement, ed. Martin Fishbein (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), pp. 293-300.

[11]Glass, "Theories of Consistency," pp. 794-5.

[12]Newcomb, "Communicative Acts," p. 293.

[13]Ibid.

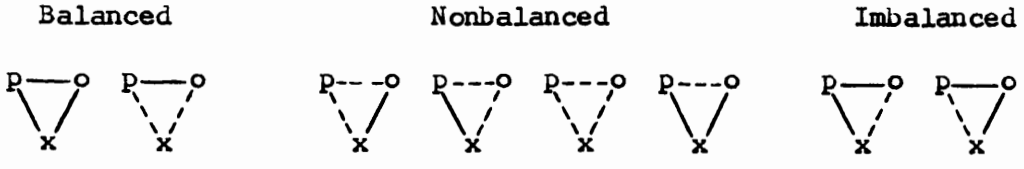
indicating in a way that the concept of the other is ever-present in the mind of the communicator.

Far more important to persuasion theory, though, is the later work of Newcomb which comes to a head in his comprehensive 1968 article.[14] Studies which he and a number of others conducted led him to the conclusion that there are three rather than two states of balance. Specifically, he argues that a triad may be either balanced, nonbalanced, or imbalanced:

> I regard a set of cognitions as imbalanced insofar as it instigates the cognizer toward <u>modification</u> of one or more relationships within the set. A cognitive set may fail to be clearly imbalanced in either of two ways. First, because it is unobjectionable as it stands, thus instigating <u>acceptance</u>; such a set is clearly balanced. Or, second, because it clearly invites <u>neither modification nor acceptance</u>--whether by reason of indifference, uncertainty, or ambivilance. This latter kind of set, neither clearly balanced nor clearly imbalanced, I shall label <u>nonbalanced</u>; changes in one of its constituent relations might result in balance, imbalance, or continuing nonbalance.[15]

The eight possible triadic relations are presented in Newcomb's formulation in Figure 2. Balanced states are those which fit Heider's definition

Figure 2
Newcomb's Tripartite System of Balance



[14]Theodore Newcomb, "Interpersonal Balance," <u>Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook</u>, eds. Robert P. Abelson, Elliot Aronson, et al (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1968), pp. 28-51.

[15]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 41.

of balance and have positive P-O relationships. Imbalanced states are those which Heider would term unbalanced and which have positive P-O relationships. Nonbalanced states are those which have negative P-O relationships, regardless of how Heider would designate them.

The earliest study to provide support for the three-state view was conducted by one of Heider's students. Jordan's study suggested that balanced situations are more pleasant than unbalanced ones. However, he reported that negative units were rated as unpleasant even when "balanced." Further, in the four sets that Heider calls balanced, positive units were found to be more pleasant than negative ones.[16] Thus Glass argues, "It would appear that ratings of pleasantness are a function of balance plus positive relations between elements of a unit; unpleasantness is a function of imbalance or negative relations between elements in the unit."[17] At base, then, the data uncovered by Jordan indicated that the simple "balanced-unbalanced" dichotomy was too ambiguous, given that the various forms in which balance and unbalance are found can vary in pleasantness.

Price, Harburg, and Newcomb removed some of the ambiguity that remained even after Jordan's study. Basically, they found that the most uncomfortable of the negative relations was the negative P-O relationship. The results of their study, summarized in Table 1, indicate

> Current versions of balance theory predict neatly to findings when P-to-O is positive; in each of the first four situations /positive P-O relations/ more than 80% of responses are as predicted, and neutral

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[16]See Nehemiah Jordan, "Behavioral Forces that are a Function of Attitudes and of Cognitive Organization," Human Relations, 6 (1953), pp. 273-87.

[17]Glass, "Theories of Consistency," p. 795.

> responses do not significantly exceed expected frequencies. When P-to-O is negative, however, responses to only one of four situations are as predicted by Heider's formula . . .[18]

Thus, these results indicate clear support for Heider's definitions of balance and unbalance when the P-O relationship is positive, but not when it is negative. In this way they lend support to Newcomb's more detailed three-state system. This study, however, substituted a third

Table 1
Summary of Pleasantness Ratings[19]

All situations in which . . .	Range of Percentages of All Scores		
	Uneasy	Neutral	Pleasant
P/O Positive			
balanced	5-6%	6-7%	87-89%
inbalanced	84-89%	0-8%	8-11%
P/O Negative			
balanced	28-43%	22-39%	33-35%
imbalanced	17-65%	15-38%	22-45%

person, Q, for the usual nonpersonal entity--a substitution which could cause different results. Newcomb, however, reports two studies conducted by Rodrigues which show similar results using the more common nonpersonal entity. The results of these studies are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3. Table 2 is a "raw" presentation of unpleasantness scores, while Table 3 compares Newcomb's and Heider's systems in terms of mean

[18]Kendall O. Price, Ernest Harburg, and Theodore M. Newcomb, "Psychological Balance in Situations of Negative Interpersonal Attitudes," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3 (1966), p. 267.

[19]Newcomb, "Interpersonal Balance," p. 36. Newcomb is reporting this data from Price, Harburg, and Newcomb, Ibid.

pleasantness ratings. All scores are taken from a scale ranging from 10 to 99 on which the lower numbers reflect more pleasantness than the higher ones.

Table 2
Ranges of Mean Scores of Unpleasantness[20]

P/O Positive	First Study	Second Study
balanced	20.2-34.7	17.9-27.1
imbalanced	61.4-64.6	73.1-73.1
P/O Negative		
balanced	54.2-59.7	63.7-65.3
imbalanced	64.6-66.1	53.1-55.7

Table 3
Mean Pleasantness Scores for Two Category Systems of Balance[21]

Heider's category		triad pattern	mean score	modified category		
	mean			mean	label	
		+++	20.2	27.4	positive balance	
	balanced 42.2	+--	34.7			
		--+	59.7			
diff. 22.1		-+-	54.2	61.3	nonbal.	diff. 35.6
		---	64.6			
	unbal. 64.3	-++	66.6			
		++-	61.4	63.0	imbal.	
		+-+	64.6			

These studies clearly indicate support for Newcomb's non-balanced relation. In addition, when paired with the Price, Harburg, and Newcomb study they make the positive P-O relationship generalizable to situations in which the third element is either a personal or nonpersonal entity.

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[20] Ibid., p. 37. Newcomb is here reporting data uncovered by the Rodrigues studies at UCLA.

[21] Ibid., p. 38. Newcomb is here reporting data uncovered by the Rodrigues studies at UCLA.

But our concern is with persuasion, and unpleasantness of relationships may not be an accurate measure of susceptibility to appeal for change. Table 4 presents a more direct measure of susceptibility to persuasion in various balance situations, providing additional support for the three-state model. Table 4 is also taken by Newcomb from the Rodrigues studies.

Table 4
Summary of Change Scores[22]

	range		mean	
	1st Study	2nd Study	1st Study	2nd Study
P/O positive				
balanced	21.4-30.1	15.6-19.1	25.8	17.3
imbalanced	47.1-47.4	45.8-45.9	47.2	45.0
P/O negative				
balanced	36.5-38.4	28.5-35.0	37.5	31.7
imbalanced	40.4-44.5	33.8-39.7	42.4	36.7

Thus, the material in tables 1 through 4 indicates both in terms of the pleasantness individuals feel in the various "balance configurations" and their willingness to change from these various sets that Newcomb's three-state balance system more closely represents the feelings that people have in various states of balance and imbalance.

Other studies have provided the beginnings of some refinements which could be applied to this system. As described to this point, the Newcomb system does not clearly take into account such potentially significant matters as the importance of a given relationship to the perceiving individual and the strength of a given bond between two elements. Price, Harburg, and McLeod reported studies in 1965 in which subjects rated the

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[22] Ibid., p. 39. Newcomb is here reporting data uncovered by the Rodrigues studies at UCLA.

intensity of the three relationships involved in balanced and imbalanced triads. They concluded that it was possible to measure the unpleasantness of various balanced and imbalanced states in terms of the intensity of the relationships involved.[23] These studies, however, were conducted using the earlier Newcomb version of balance theory, the A-B-X system. Though we might speculate that similar results could be expected if the P-O-X system were used, we cannot be certain. However, Rodrigues reported a study in 1965 which used the more standard P-O-X system that more clearly holds to the phenomenological approach. He found, first, that the importance the perceiver attributes to X "is related to the amount of tension generated by imbalanced triads." Further, he indicates, "the greater the number of strong bonds in an imbalanced triad, the greater the tension generated by it."[24] Such studies need to be followed up in detail. For example, which of the three relationships will generate pressures for change under specific varying degrees of importance place upon both X and the three relationships. But these studies do indicate with some degree of clarify that such investigations are possible and that it is possible to make over more specific predictions based upon Newcomb's model.

BALANCE THEORY, ATTITUDE CHANGE, AND PERSUASION

Newcomb's version of balance theory has been developed in a more complete manner than has thus far been suggested, as will become clear within the next few pages. But we now have enough of the basic theory

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[23]Kendall O. Price, Ernest Harburg, and Jack M. McLeod, "Positive and Negative Affect as a Function of Perceived Discrepancy in ABX Situations," Human Relations, 18 (1965), pp. 97-8.

[24]Aroldo Rodrigues, "On the Differential Effects of Some Parameters of Balance," The Journal of Psychology, 61 (1965), p. 249.

before us to begin an investigation of its implications for persuasion. In this section primary emphasis will be placed upon drawing several implications from balance studies which can help the student of persuasion better understand how the problem of changing human attitudes might be approached. We are here concerned, then, with persuasion--the primary motive of traditional rhetoric and a viable secondary motive in the new rhetoric.

To begin at the most basic level, a rough set of implications regarding persuasion and attitude change can be deduced from the data now before us. At base, the persuader's task is easiest when he works with an audience[25] which is in a state of imbalance his message can relieve. Next in line, of course, would be the states of non-balance followed by the balanced perceptions. Colburn argues that the function of a persuasive speech is twofold: first, the persuader needs to arouse a state of psychological imbalance in the audience; after that he would attempt to offer recommendations which will restore balance.[26] In the case of imbalanced situations, the task of the persuader is simplified in that the imbalance already exists. At most, the persuader might be expected to make the audience cognizant of the psychological tension. But in the other two states, the persuader must not just bring existing imbalance to the surface; in many cases he must create the imbalance from what the

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[25]Audience is taken to mean, throughout this chapter, one or more persons addressed by a speaker. Further, in certain cases, audience may refer to the self, as in the internal dialog of the "I" and the "me."

[26]C. William Colburn, "Fear Arousing Appeals," Speech Communication: Analysis and Readings, eds. Howard H. Martin and Kenneth E. Anderson (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), pp. 214-23.

audience perceives as a relatively "pleasant" state.

Because of the apparent difficulty of persuading an audience that has a balanced set of cognitions, perhaps a direct discussion of this persuasive task is in order. Roughly speaking, depending upon the specific situation, the persuader could go either of two directions in addressing an audience of this type. First, he could move to strengthen their balanced state. Table 2 indicates that even in the most pleasant of the eight triadic relationships, there is still some uneasiness. By implication, it would be possible to make the bonds stronger and thus make the balanced position more resistant to change. If, however, the persuader's goal lies in a direction opposite the balanced leanings of the audience, he must begin his task by changing at least one relationship: he must induce some degree of imbalance. As Table 3 indicates, this is a most difficult task; the balanced states appear quite resistant to change. Then, after creating psychological imbalance he must restore balance by changing yet another of the relationships between elements of the triad. The end product, of course, must be a different triadic relationship than was found in the original situation.

First, then, we can rank-order the three balance states in terms of their usefulness to the persuader as imbalanced, nonbalanced, and balanced. It is possible, however, to further break down the nonbalanced relationships in terms of their utility to the persuader. Those nonbalanced relationships which Heider termed unbalanced (--- and -++) show higher willingness to change scores in Table 3, and thus, could be expected to be more susceptible to persuasive appeals than would the other two nonbalanced situations.

A final breakdown which can be made on this relatively unrefined

level is a rank-ordering of each of the triadic relationships. Notice, though, that data is not available for each of the eight sign patterns in terms of change scores; we must settle for the pleasantness scores which are not as directly relevant to claims about attitude change. Table 2 suggests that the most susceptible-to-change pattern (given the previous assumptions about the rank-order of imbalance, nonbalance, and balance) is +-+. The others, in order, should be ++-, -++, ---, --+, -+-, +--, and +++.

Until now I have concentrated on predictions about which of the triadic relationships can be most easily approached by a persuader. However, it is important that the persuader understand which of the three relationships (that between the perceiver and the other, between the perceiver and the object, or the perceived relationship between the other and the object) is most susceptible to change in given situations. Table 5 provides the data for these predictions.

Table 5
Mean Scores of Willingness
to Change Signs of Intra-Structure Relations[27]

Structural Properties	Sign Pattern	Positive Sign Presented P/O	P/X	O/X	Negative Sign Presented P/O	P/X	O/X	Mean for Sign Pattern
Heider-bal.	+++	21.8	20.6	21.7				
Newcomb-bal.								25.1
P/X--O/X agree	+--	24.2				35.8	26.3	
Heider-bal.	--+			37.7	39.7	34.3		
Newcomb-nonbal.								38.0
P/X--O/X disag.	-+-		22.7		43.4		50.5	
Heider-unbal.	---				48.7	38.4	33.3	
Newcomb-nonbal.								40.7
P/X--O/X agree	-++		27.6	42.4	54.1			
Heider-unbal.	++-	35.4	31.3				71.5	
Newcomb-imbal.								47.0
P/X--O/X disag.	+-+	32.7		59.6		51.6		
Mean		28.5	25.5	40.3	46.5	40.0	45.4	

[27]Newcomb, "Interpersonal Balance," p. 43. Newcomb is here reporting data uncovered by the Rodrigues studies at UCLA.

Several pages could be consumed relating the many "iffy" statements that could be drawn from this data. On the broadest level, as is indicated by the mean scores at the bottom of the table, there is a greater willingness to change a negative sign than a positive one--a factor balance theorists refer to as positivity force. Among these mean scores, greatest willingness to change is found in the negative P-O relationship, followed by the negative O-X sign, the positive O-X, and so on. Regarding individual signs in particular triadic relations, the most susceptible sign is the negative O-X sign in the unbalanced (Newcomb) triad. Presumably this is the point at which the persuader would find it most likely that he could induce change. Furthermore, the changing of this one sign in the ++- triad would make the triad a +++, the most pleasant balanced state and the most resistant to change (hence, most resistant to counter-persuasion). Other conclusions which can be drawn from this data include: (1) When P-O relationships and P-X relationships are positive (especially in balanced situations) there is little willingness to change them; (2) Willingness to change the perceived O-X relationship is high in all situations, primarily because it is the one relationship that does not represent P's own attitude; and (3) There is a rather high willingness to change a negative P-O in unbalanced situations.[28] Put in terms more familiar to students of persuasion, (1) It is quite difficult to get a person to change a positive personally held evaluation or attitude; (2) It is relatively easy to get a person to change his understanding of another person's opinions; and (3) It is relatively easy to get a person to change an unfavorable evaluation of another person. The persuader is

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[28] Ibid., pp. 42-3.

more likely to achieve success in these and other instances if he can deal with those relationships which are most susceptible to change and avoid those which are least open to modification.

Further refinement of these conclusions, in terms of the strength of the various relationships in given patterns, is possible. The data in Table 6 allows us to draw a few conclusions along these lines. Specifically, we can conclude that there is relatively little willingness

Table 6
Mean Ratings of Dissatisfaction Under Varying Conditions of P's Attraction Toward O[29]

	Unpleasantness		Willingness to Change	
	weak	strong	weak	strong
P/O Positive				
balanced	34.3	22.5	30.7	17.3
imbalanced	61.5	73.1	47.8	45.8
differences	-27.2	-50.6	-17.7	-28.5
P/O Negative				
balanced	58.9	64.5	43.6	31.7
imbalanced	45.5	54.4	31.8	36.7
differences	+13.4	+10.1	+12.2	-5.0

to change when P has a strong attraction for O in a balanced situation. Greatest willingness to change is found when a situation is imbalanced and the attraction of P to O is weak. And, again, a rough rank-ordering of the susceptibility to attitude change through persuasion in the various situations included in this data is possible. These results are less specific than the results of Price, Harburg, and McLeod, but do address the issue of attitude change--which the latter did not directly attempt. Further, the data in Table 6 is supported by a study conducted by

[29] Ibid., p. 45. Newcomb is here reporting data uncovered by the Rodrigues studies at UCLA.

Hershkowitz [30] which considers not only the strength of the P/O relation, but also that of the P/X relation.

Over the past few pages, two issues involved in balance studies of pleasantness and willingness to change have been touched upon, but deserve more direct mention: positivity and agreement. The balance theorists posit, as their basic assumption, that persons will tend to prefer states of balance to states of imbalance. As a corollary to this they maintain that if an individual senses he is in an imbalanced state he may feel tensions leading him to change some relation so as to achieve psychological balance. However, some of the data in Table 5 do not fully support this conclusion. In some instances individuals have showed a preference for positivity or agreement rather than balance. For example, in the --+ triad, which Newcomb calls nonbalanced, the greatest willingness to change was found in the P-O (negative) relationship. Such a change would create a +-+ triad, which is a clearly imbalanced one. A change of either of the other two signs would have produced a more pleasant, nonbalanced triad which would be more in concert with the central tenet of the balance theorists. Rodrigues, in a study reported in 1967, found that "willingness to change the P/O bond is . . . clearly determined by positivity forces."[31] Notice that in Table 5 there is a low willingness to change a positive P-O relationship even when such a change might reduce tension by changing an imbalanced triad to a nonbalanced one. Further, there is a high willingness to change negative P-O links even when doing so will create a state of clear imbalance.

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[30] Ibid., p. 46.

[31] Aroldo Rodrigues, "Effects of Balance, Positivity, and Agreement in Triadic Social Relations," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 5 (1967), p. 472.

In other instances, there is a clear preference to change a sign in order to get P-X, O-X agreement. Rodrigues maintains that willingness to change the O-X bond is often dictated by agreement forces.[32] Notice, again, in Table 5 that willingness to change the O-X link is closely associated with whether such a change would create agreement or disagreement with the P-X sign.

These apparent exceptions to the basic notion of balance theory, though, do not invalidate the theory. Often changes designed to bring agreement also bring the individual "closer" to balance. For example, in the ++- imbalanced situation, greatest willingness to change is found in the O-X bond and a change there would also produce the strongest type of balanced set. Further, as I will argue in the final section of this chapter, it is possible to conceptualize positivity and agreement forces as "offshoots" of balance forces if we recall that for the symbolic interactionist "identification" is the basic human motive.

To this point I have concentrated on presenting predictive conclusions, both general and specific, regarding the situations most likely to be open to change through persuasive appeal. Now I shall investigate balance theory as a basis for persuasion theory through three of the central issues in persuasion: source credibility, general persuasibility, and innoculation. As this inquiry progresses, however, it is necessary that the reader be cognizant of the fact that the data being investigated has not been directly addressed to these issues. Rather, any conclusions drawn are speculations or, put in a more positive sense, inferences based upon seemingly reasonable extensions of the available raw data. To the

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[32] Ibid.

best of my knowledge, no studies have been conducted from the viewpoint of balance theory which have directly addressed the importance of the source in persuasive attempts, the general persuasibility of individuals, or the need for innoculation against counter-persuasion. Put another way, persuasion has not been the primary interest of the balance theorists, and those for whom persuasion has been a primary interest have not yet explored their subject via balance theory. In a way, then, the next few pages are aimed more at exploring the possibilities that balance theory holds for predictions regarding these three central issues than at drawing conclusions about the issues.

Perhaps the most central, or at least the most often discussed, issue in persuasion is source credibility. To cast source credibility in balance terminology, we are here concerned with the relative importance of the influence one person can cast upon another person in a communicative situation. According to the data presented in this chapter the P-O bond, or the relationship between the two persons in a triad, is the most important of the three relationships. First, it is this relationship which determines whether a situation is capable of balance or is non-balanced. Second, the theory suggests that in cases where the P-O bond is positive, other elements in the triad are more likely to change. In the two cases of imbalance, the simplest route to balance involves changing either, in one case, a negative O-X or, in the other case, a negative P-X link. In both cases the influence of the P-O bond is the dominant one, possibly even casting its influence on the negative element in an amount sufficient to assist change. Further, in both of these imbalanced relations, it would be possible to change the other positive sign

(P-X or O-X) and restore balance. Third, we can term the P-O relationship "dominant" in that it is the hardest to change, in most cases, when a positive bond exists and it is the most likely to change when the bond is negative. At any rate, balance theory asserts--with some rather powerful evidence at hand--that the strongest type of relationship is one between persons.

As for the specific matter of whether this strong bond between persons operates as a "form of proof" (ethos) in persuasive situations, two comments seem in order: First, none of the data seems to clearly disagree with the strong conclusions of Hovland[33] and others working from perspectives other than balance theory that the source of a communication is, at least in the short run, important in producing attitude change. Second, there is a clear need for expansion of balance studies to measure actual attempts at persuasion involving, in the current instance, the use of high and low credible sources. Roughly speaking such studies might take up where the current studies have left off. We now have strong information relative to the pleasantness and willingness to change involved in each of the eight triadic relationships. Studies designed to present these situations to subjects, followed by persuasive appeals from different types of sources could test the ability of sources to influence individuals to make the changes which we now claim they are either relatively willing or relatively unwilling to make.

In sum, specific conclusions about the power of sources to influence change in balanced, nonbalanced, and imbalanced situations cannot be

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[33]See Carl I. Hovland, Irving L. Janis, and Harold H. Kelley, Communication and Persuasion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 19-55.

drawn because the data simply is not available. But the clear importance of the "interpersonal" relationship involved in the P-O bond at least suggests that balance theory provides a rich grounding for studies searching for such data.

A second issue in persuasion theory is general persuasibility. I have not found sufficient clear evidence to support any specific conclusions about general persuasibility. However, there is enough evidence to suggest at least two intriguing possibilities.

First, there is evidence to suggest that in even the most balanced state individuals are still susceptible to change. Though the levels of unpleasantness and willingness to change are low in the clearly balanced relationships, some tension for change still exists. This does not argue that individuals are, in all circumstances, fully open to persuasion; neither does it deny it. Rather, it suggests that the possibility of persuasion exists in even the most "comfortable" arrangement.

Second, it is probable that balance theory would replace the concept of persuasibility with a notion of the "level of tension" that one can withstand before seeking to restore balance. Direct support for this statement can be found even in Newcomb's basic three-state view of balance. His argument, rephrased to the current concern, would be that although nonbalanced situations produce some unpleasantness and develop some willingness to change, they are still characterized by ambivalence. In other words, in nonbalanced situations, generally, the tension produced is not quite sufficient to motivate a subject to actively seek change. One prediction along this line might be that in nonbalanced situations, if the persuader can develop a strong enough relationship between certain elements in the triad he will be able to create tension strong enough to

motivate change. Much more research is needed to determine the "threshold of tension" which different people can withstand in different situations before any concept resembling general persuasibility can be fully developed in a balance approach to persuasion.

A third issue of some importance in persuasion concerns counter-persuasion and the innoculation of an audience against it. Viewed from the standpoint of balance theory, perhaps the strongest means of innoculation is the establishment of firm relationships (and intense ones) in a balanced set of cognitions. If the persuader can leave the audience in a balanced condition, particularly one involving three positive relations, they will themselves tend to ward off later attempts to change their attitudes. Table 5 makes the point clear: balanced relationships spur very little willingness to change. Other data indicate, further, that balanced relationships are quite pleasant. These two ideas should combine to indicate that a balanced set of cognitions will not only fail to respond quickly to appeals for change, but should actually put up a good deal of resistance to such appeals.

Persuasion texts are full of arguments noting that persuasive campaigns, rather than single speeches, are capable of bringing lasting change in a person's belief systems. One of the persuasive situations discussed earlier in this chapter involves the persuader who finds his audience's cognitions balanced and who, if he is to achieve his goal, must first induce some sort of imbalance into them. This in itself is no easy task, for the balanced relationships will resist change. Quite probably, a long campaign is needed to bring about such imbalance. The task of this campaign is made more difficult, from the standpoint of

balance theory, because after each of the separate messages in the campaign the individual is quite susceptible to counter-appeals which will restore his earlier state of balance. On the other hand, if the persuasive campaign can succeed in bringing a person's cognitions into a new balance the danger of a counter-campaign re-changing the person's attitude will be fairly small.

From this we can conclude, at least tentatively, that if the persuader succeeds in establishing balance, no specific innoculation is really required. The balanced attitudes will protect themselves from change. If, however, the persuader has to leave an audience in a state of imbalance at some point in a persuasive campaign, a good deal of innoculation against counter-persuasion is called for.

In sum, then, several specific predictions can be drawn from balance literature which can be of aid to the persuader--predictions regarding the conditions under which most people will be willing to change attitudes and which attitudes they will be most willing to change. On the other hand, not enough research has been conducted specifically aimed at tying balance theory to persuasion to allow us to generalize to such relatively important issues as the influence of the source and the general persuasibility of all people. Despite this it appears that balance theory can provide a rich basis for the study of persuasion. It is, however, up to the students of persuasion to make the yet needed linkages by undertaking the types of studies which will reveal the now missing information.

BALANCE THEORY AS SUPPORT FOR BURKEIAN "IDENTIFICATION"

The balance theorists' claim that individuals primarily attempt to maintain balance in their cognitive systems seems, in a way, to represent a claim that balance is the primary human motive. On the other hand, the position taken in an earlier chapter of this thesis argued that identification was the primary human motive. Thus balance theory and symbolic interaction seem to be in conflict regarding the primary force motivating human action. The conflict, I feel, is more apparent than real. The assumption of balance as a basic motive was an early claim made by Heider, and much more recent literature has undermined that claim. Now the balance studies seem to suggest that in different conditions either balance, positivity, or agreement forces may be the primary motivators of action. On the other hand, it is possible to speculate that these three forces are part of a larger system which Burke terms "identification." In this section, then, I shall explore the nature of these three forces with the possibility in mind that each, in its own way, may help the individual to further his basic goal of identification.

In Chapter 6 identification was discussed in its two functions: First, it was termed the prime rhetorical motive in that man seeks to constantly "identify" with other men; second, it was termed a means of achieving "identification" with other men in that "smaller" identifications can be used as the basis for appeals designed to create broader identifications. In Chapter 8 we additionally considered the notion that identification, through the operations of heriarchic integration, provided the basic mechanism for social order. In the pages that follow support will be sought for identification considered both in the broad

and narrow senses.

At least two sets of data from balance literature lend general support to the centrality of identification: the importance of the P-O bond and the findings of preferences for positivity in certain circumstances.

In all the data reviewed in this chapter, the importance of the P-O relationship has been clear. When P-O is positive it is an extremely difficult bond to change. This in itself argues for a general notion of identification, in that it indicates that individuals prefer to be in positive contact with one another. Basically, the positive nature of the P-O linkage indicates that people prefer positive interpersonal relationships. This is much like the notion of integrative social order through interpersonal identification. Further, the high degree of unpleasantness and willingness to change negative P-O relationships provides additional support for this assumption.

Second, there is a fairly clear preference for positivity over negativity in all of the triadic relationships. In only a few instances reported in Table 5, for example, is the highest willingness to change found in what was originally a positive linkage of elements. The only contradictory instance is found in the +-+ imbalanced set. In this case the positive O-X bond seems to be the most susceptible to change. And, in this case it would appear that positivity is being set aside for agreement (the change of this sign would bring P-X and O-X into agreement), a move which we will momentarily see can also provide support for a more particular notion of identification. Now, how does positivity argue for the concept of identification? Basically, identification implies togetherness or, at least, a feeling for the views of another person who may not hold views similar to one's own. But more important, identification is

grounded in the concept of substance[34] which Burke often develops in terms of property "ownership."[35] We have already noticed how positivity in the P-O relationship implies the former concept of identification. Positivity in the P-X bond should "automatically" link to the property-substance notion of identification in that the P-X bond is a link between a person and a non-personal entity. This leaves the O-X bond to be explained in relation to consubstantiality. In one instance (+-+) there is relatively high willingness to change the O-X to a negative linkage. In terms of a given individual's desire for identification with "property" we must remember that the O-X relationship does not involve the perceiver's relationship to X at all. Ratner, it involves the perceiver's view of the other's link with X. Thus, this one exception to positivity in the O-X bond does not serve to refute an otherwise clear preference for positivity. On the other hand, the preference for positivity in the other seven O-X linkages suggests that the perceiver may recognize in others the same desire for positive "property" linkages that he himself has. In these various ways, then, positivity lends at least strong inferential support for the primacy of identification as rhetorical motive.

Agreement is a second force which seems to dictate individual preferences in certain situations. Basically, agreement refers to the

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[34]See Marie Hochmuth Nichols, Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 85-90. Also see Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 29-35 and 43-58.

[35]See Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Toward History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961). Further, see Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 23-7.

presence of either positive P-X and O-X relationships or negative ones in a given triad. Table 5 indicates that willingness to change either P-X or O-X is relatively high in most situations in which the two are not in sign agreement. Such a change would bring about agreement, resulting in lower willingness to change either of the then agreeing relationships.

Agreement forces can be profitably viewed as a desire for "external identification" (or, identification of feelings between two persons in regard to some "object"). Thus when there is a fairly strong feeling of unpleasantness and a high willingness to change either the P-X or O-X relationship in a non-agreeing configuration (e.g., +-+), we can view the desire for a change as a desire to create a stronger social bond between two persons via their evaluation of a third element.

Finally we come to the desire for balance itself, which manifests itself in other interpersonal situations. And, just as agreement forces were termed as forces calling for "external identification," balance forces can be termed forces toward "internal identification." Most versions of balance theory, and Newcomb's in particular, view a triadic relationship totally from the perspective of the perceiver. In other words, balance theory is concerned with how one individual's psychological processes are internally organized. Thus when one is primarily concerned with achieving or maintaining a balanced set of cognitions, he is directly concerned with "setting his own house in order." Put in more Burkeian terms, he is seeking internal order, seeking to have his views relevant to a given object, event, or whatever be "substantially alike." Viewed this way, forces for balance can lend support to forces for "internal identification." Recalling that symbolic interaction theory includes

the intrapersonal in the realm of rhetoric, it is clear that internal attempts at persuasion and identification take place. Thus when attempts to change certain triadic relationships are conducted internally to achieve personal psychological balance we may say that intrapersonal rhetoric is at work.

There are times, of course, when the need for internal balance may come in conflict with the need for external agreement or when positivity forces may outweigh both of these. Some work has been done by balance theorists to suggest when each of these forces will prevail: Rodrigues has concluded, for example, that willingness to change the P-X bond and willingness to differentiate feelings toward O is most strongly influenced by balance forces, while willingness to change the P-O bond is primarily a function of positivity forces and change in the O-X bond is primarily accomplished through agreement forces. However, it is possible that none of these three forces might have a superior hand in some situations. In the --+ nonbalanced situation, for example, there is very little difference in willingness to change from one element to the next. In cases like these, presumably, the individual must make a decision as to which of the bonds is most important to him and his willingness to change one or more of them will probably be a function of that decision.

At base, though, there is sufficient evidence to allow the drawing of some tentative implications regarding the relationship between balance, positivity, and agreement forces and the Burkeian concept of identification. The occasional strength of positivity and agreement factors has proved bothersome at times to the balance theorists because it has gradually chipped away at the Heiderian notion that balance is the primary force regulating the construction of an individual's psychological processes.

If we consider each of these three forces to be aspects of a broader notion of identification in social actions, and there is adequate reason to at least begin considering such a view, we move from relatively individually oriented questions of theoretical inconsistency to more rigorous questions of how the individual's psychological processes operate to bring social order to the arena of social action.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has been addressed to two basic questions. First, of what utility is the literature of balance theory to the student of persuasion? And, second, when viewed from the standpoint of symbolic interaction is balance theory a self-contained study or is it a part of a larger theory of social action?

Students of persuasion have been slow to grasp the probable value of balance theory for their subject. As a result, very few (if any) studies have been attempted using the method of balance investigations to explore the ways in which attitudes are actually changed by external appeals. Rather, we can speculate about the applicability of balance theory to persuasion using literature which has been primarily aimed at perception theory. Based upon the available studies, however, it is possible to conclude that balance theory does imply several general and specific predictions of value to the study of persuasion. In fact, the data reviewed in this chapter (given that it was not originally aimed at answering the questions of the persuader) is so rich with implications for persuasion that I will register a strong recommendation to our field in general that studies using balance methodology be undertaken on a regular basis. Surely many questions that confront persuasion theory could be at

least partially answered by such investigations.

And, balance theory can perhaps profit from association with the new rhetoric. In the final section of this chapter we found reason to bring balance theory, along with its side-discoveries of positivity and agreement forces, under the larger symbolic interactionist heading of "identification." Such a linkage of the work of the cognitive psychologists and the "new rhetoricians" could help to broaden the scope and understanding of both fields.

Chapter 10

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Thinking about starting points can not only help one see and understand the old and to judge it, but such thinking can suggest ways in which rhetoric might grow beyond its present state, and overcome its present limits.[1]

This study has been aimed at helping rhetoric to grow beyond the limitations of traditional theory. The germ for this version of "new rhetoric" has been lurking in the stacks of our libraries for years, some of it in use and some of it almost totally ignored. Kenneth Burke's writings provided much of the original inspiration for the study--and his thinking has been explored to a significant extent in our journals. But the explications of Burke's ideas about rhetoric have largely been confined to his Rhetoric of Motives and an occasional relevant article. This appears to me to be a very restricted view of the utility which Burke has for the rhetorical theorist. In effect, we have shown an interest in Burke only to the point of discussing his conclusions. We have largely ignored the ideas in his other works which are not specifically addressed to rhetoric and we have ignored the underpinnings of his rhetorical theory.

As a result of this perceived inadequacy in the scholarship surrounding Burke's new rhetoric, this study has explored a fuller range

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[1]Otis M. Walter, "On Views of Rhetoric, Whether Conservative or Progressive," Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric: Selected Readings (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 27.

of Burke's writings with hopes of filling in the foundations that lie behind his views of the rhetorical efforts of man. But Burke himself leaves several questions not fully answered, and others he has answered without great clarity. Therefore, the writings of a group of theorists from psychology and sociology termed "symbolic interactionists" has been consulted to fill in the blank spaces and to better prepare the groundwork for a full understanding of the type of rhetorical system that Burke is discussing.

Through Burke and the symbolic interactionists the starting points for rhetorical theory based in symbolic interactionism have been explored. Johannesen's basic questions served as the "research plan" for the study, and by now the answers to Johannesen's six philosophical questions should be fairly clear. Man is distinguished from all other beings because of his symbol-using capacities. Man is defined in terms of his language. He is so deeply grounded in language that he is screened from objective reality by it. All that he sees and does, in terms of his social behavior, is mediated through his language. A rock has meaning to him only after he assigns that meaning--and he assigns meaning through his symbol system. He acts in response to things and events only as he defines them--through his language. His reasons for acting--his motives--are drastically affected by his language. Man is ever defining all that goes on around him, and his definitions are screened through the language he uses. Part One of this study systematically attacked the problem of explaining the starting points for a symbolically oriented theory of rhetoric. The conclusions drawn in those four chapters provide us with a relatively clear understanding of the nature of man, the nature of language and meaning, reality and our knowledge of it, and the way in which ethics fits into man's total system of action.

In Part Two specific implications for rhetorical theory of the symbolic interactionists' views of man and society have been drawn. This theory is a much broader one than is the traditional theory based in Aristotle's Rhetoric. At base, it judges all pragmatically oriented symbolic behavior to be rhetorical. This means that all verbal and non-verbal symbolic behavior aimed at achieving "social goals" (in a broad sense) can be studied as rhetoric. Further, it more clearly moves us from the arena of formal speaker-audience situation to both interpersonal and intrapersonal situations. The new rhetoric declares the primary rhetorical motive of man to be "identification," a much broader motive than the "persuasion" of the traditional theory. The rhetorical theory being studied does not deny the efficacy of persuasion as a type of rhetorical motive, but it places primary emphasis upon the broader term, identification. In line with the pragmatic orientation for rhetoric, and its grounding in the motive of identification, rhetoric has also been seen to be a strategic activity aimed at solving social problems. The basic method of such a rhetoric requires that the "speaker" momentarily become one with those whom he is addressing. He carries on an internal dialogue between himself and his internalized picture of the "other." In this dialogue he tests his ideas and plans his strategies so that his overt symbolic act may be more likely to achieve his desired goal.

Finally, in the last two chapters, rhetoric was considered as a force operating in society. First, it was investigated in terms of the ways in which the primary rhetorical motive, identification, promotes the social order and the ways in which the division always present in our world both seeks to tear away at social order and provides the impetus for

hopefully progressive changes in that order. Second, one of the correlative studies of the symbolic interactionists--balance theory--was investigated. It was found to be a rich source of material for a theory of persuasion. This approach to persuasion, which is still a viable motive in the new rhetoric, would emphasize the personalized ways that individuals look at and react to the world. Thus, it emphasizes the importance of rhetoric as "addressed" symbolic behavior. Further, balance theory was found to be full of specific implications for the conditions under which persuasion can most likely be accomplished.

The perspective of the symbolic interactionists offers great promise for rhetorical theory. It is a broadly based theory which seeks to explain all human interaction which is symbolic in nature. Because rhetoric is primarily a social instrument, it can find a worthy counterpart in symbolic interaction theory.

But much work remains to be done in the attempt to draw a full theory of rhetoric from the writings of these theorists. The current study has been concerned with only the most basic implications which can be drawn from symbolic interactionism. Several recommendations for further study and exploration seem in order.

On the broadest level, the study of symbolic interaction needs to continue in order to more fully understand the nature of these social theories. As just one example, role-taking and the "I"-"me" dialogue is one concept which holds tremendous promise for students of rhetoric. The symbolic interactionists have done far more with this concept than I have reported in these pages. We can probably more fully understand the implications of the nature of rhetoric as "addressed" by taking a longer

and more critical look at the symbolic interaction studies of role-taking. The same applies to their investigations of the social act, the all-pervasive nature of language, their concept of symbolic action, the nature of symbol-as-motive, and so on. In short, we need to take a longer look at the work of these theorists if we are to take full advantage of the groundwork this perspective offers to rhetoric.

In addition, work needs to proceed in devising theories of argumentation and rhetorical criticism based in this perspective. In recent years many writers have attacked the formal systems of argument which have been relied upon by rhetoricians in the past. However, no fully adequate counter-theories seem to have emerged. Symbolic interaction theory would seem to support strongly any move against objectively imposed formal systems of argument. Perhaps a sustained investigation of the literature of the symbolic interactionists would help to begin the construction of a more individually oriented theory of argument.

This perspective also suggests a theory for rhetorical criticism much different from the critical method employed by traditional critics. Burke's pentad seems to be the key to such a system, as it appears to cover the full range of human symbolic interaction. In addition, the "correct" application of the pentad in criticism rejects the "cookie-cutter" approach that has often prevailed in our journals. Rather, each critical piece is tailored to the piece of discourse it investigates--the methodology comes out of the situation under investigation. It is not yet clear, however, how one goes about devising such methodologies. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's recent text[2] attempts to explain this perspective

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[2]See chapters one through three of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

for the critic. And, it contains several excellent examples of "Burkeian criticism." But it is an initial thrust and cannot be complete. Additional work to clarify this new critical angle is imperative.

Finally, we need to more fully explore the literature and methodology of balance theory to discover more of its implications for the student of persuasion. The studies which now relate at all to persuasion were undertaken from the standpoint of interpersonal perception and any attempt to draw implications for persuasion from these studies must fall a bit short of its goal. The balance theorists have not directly addressed persuasion because that is not their primary interest. The conclusions of this study, particularly as contained in Chapter Nine, do suggest that balance theory can provide a viable methodology for persuasion research. It is now up to students of persuasion to complete the task for themselves.

Now that ten chapters have passed, it may appear that we are still drowning in a sea of data. I think not. Though the literature of the symbolic interactionists is extensive--and much of it has been considered in this study--it is unified by a consistent and emphatic view of man and language. Thus, while it is a broad theory it is also a close-knit theory and one which stands ready to do additional service as the basis for a theory of rhetoric.

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